

Submitter: Jamie Nicholson

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Education

Measure: HB5014

Members of the Committee, thank you for your time this morning.

My name is Jamie Nicholson and I am the Child Nutrition Program Manager for Lincoln County School District. I am here to speak to you today in support of the Farm to School program and the importance of sustaining the current level of \$10.2 million in funding.

The non-competitive Farm to School grants our District has received each biennium have allowed us to expand our local food offerings significantly. Over the past several years we have also received competitive Farm to School grants to build an infrastructure of both traditional and hydroponic gardens. Students receive a hands-on farm and garden education highlighting the importance of growing and eating healthy local foods. This year we used student grown foods in our school meals. During Covid-19, our County was at a standstill like so many others. For us, the shutdown resulted in no more tourists, which meant NO WORK in an already struggling community living paycheck to paycheck. We started serving meals from school buses the Monday after the Governor's announcement to close schools, 3 meals a day, 7 days a week. But we had challenges; delivery delays, product shortages, and then the devastating fires in Otis. Hundreds of families were displaced overnight. When the Red Cross came, they didn't show up with truckloads of food, they relied on what we had in our area. With the help of our Farm to School dollars, we purchased food from local restaurants and other local food partners to fill the gaps, keeping the restaurants going, and our students fed.

Farm to School is about so much more than eating local, it keeps local ALIVE. The look of relief on a mother's face when we arrived to feed her kids when she could not, is a look I will never forget. The partnerships we created over that time will forever hold strong in Lincoln County.

I ask that you support the current level of funding so this program can continue to support communities like mine. Thank you.