



Joint Committee On Ways and Means  
Oregon State Capitol  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301

*April 6, 2023*

Co-Chairs Steiner and Sanchez and members of the Committee: .

I am writing on behalf of *Food Roots, a rural Oregon nonprofit organization*, in support of maintaining the current service level of \$10.2M dollars for the Farm to School Grant Program. This Grant program provides critical funding for schools and early childhood education programs to purchase Oregon foods, hands-on farm and garden education programs, equipment and infrastructure for food producers and technical assistance for the farm to school community. Sustaining the current level of \$10.2 million dollars, leverages federal dollars to support dependable business relationships between schools and food producers and maintain consistent educational programs that connect students to agriculture and nutrition

Since 2006, Food Roots has been providing school and garden-based youth education programming centered on agriculture, food systems, nutrition and environmental education. We partner with all three Title 1 school districts in Tillamook County with our programming that includes supporting schools with purchasing Oregon grown and north coast grown food items for their lunch programs. We operate a local food hub that aggregates from local producers and provides the infrastructure and administration to sell this food on behalf of roughly 50 rural farmers, fishers and value-added producers. Additionally, we have been a recipient of the Farm to School CNP competitive education program funding which has enabled us to reach over 1,000 rural students through our regular classroom and garden based lessons; connect students with fresh local food through tasting tables, and take kids to local farms and marinas through field trips.

As an educator and food systems organization, we support this grant program because it directly aligns with our mission to grow a robust and equitable food system in Tillamook County, Oregon. Through this state funding, our students are learning and building skills such as environmental literacy, nutrition, economic resiliency through food and ag careers and other important life skills, in addition to the critical food access this program provides to our low-income students (60%) who are eligible for free and reduced lunches.

I ask that you support this grant program in the state budget at the current level of \$10.2 million so this program can continue to support healthy kids, schools and communities.

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