

SB 785 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Education

Action Date: 04/09/25

Action: Do pass with amendments. Refer to Ways and Means by prior reference. (Printed A-Eng).

Vote: 4-1-0-0

Yeas: 4 - Frederick, Gelser Blouin, Robinson, Weber

Nays: 1 - Sollman

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

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Meeting Dates: 3/10, 4/9

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure defines agriculture program, agriculture teacher, and qualified student. It establishes the Agriculture Education Scholarship Program in the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) and allows HECC to award grants to qualified students, identify qualified agriculture programs, and establish rules to implement and determine criteria to award the grants. It limits grants to one full-time academic year. The measure applies to the 2026-2027 school year. It appropriates \$1 million from the General Fund to HECC to administer the program.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Agriculture workforce development
- Other opportunities available
- Applicant location after Oregon

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

The amendment replaces the measure.

BACKGROUND:

The [Oregon Department of Education](#) divides career and technical education (CTE) into nine career pathways. Agriculture education, plant/agronomy/horticulture systems, natural resources systems, and food products and processing are four of those career pathways. These CTE courses prepare students for diverse post-high school education and training opportunities, including direct employment, apprenticeships, and college degree programs.

According to the [Higher Education Coordinating Commission \(HECC\)](#), there are 7,419 students enrolled in agriculture and natural resource degrees at public universities. According to the [2022 US Census of Agriculture](#), during the 2022 year, there were 21,898 new or beginning farmers. In the same report, Oregon had 35,547 farms and sold over \$6.7 billion worth of agriculture products. The report showed that 96 percent of farms in Oregon are family farms and 13 percent of Oregon farms sell directly to consumers.