

Submitter: Melina Barker
On Behalf Of: Oregon Farm to School Network
Committee: House Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3435

TO: House Committee on Education

FROM: Melina Barker, Oregon Farm to School Network

SUBJECT: Yes on HB 3435

Chair Neron, Vice-Chair McIntire, Vice-Chair Dobson, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Melina Barker, I am the Director of the Oregon Farm to School Network, a community -driven network of over 2,000 teachers, food producers, child nutrition professionals, nonprofit organizations and individuals. The Oregon Farm to School Network is in strong support of House Bill 3435, School Meals for All, which would ensure that every Oregon kid has the food they need at school, regardless of where they live in the state or how much money their parents make.

School Meals for All reduces barriers for students and increases capacity of child nutrition programs to participate in farm to school programs that support high quality, freshly prepared meals using local ingredients that support resilient local communities.

We know that many students count on school meals for the bulk of their nutrition. We also know that the burden for child nutrition programs to serve students with limited funds and many requirements creates a situation where capacity is stretched thin. Instead of spending valuable time attempting to collect school meal debt, with School Meals for All, child nutrition programs can focus capacity on meal quality and featuring local products.

School cafeterias are also learning environments. Let's teach our students that we all deserve access to nutritious meals without barriers or stigma.

Please support HB 3435 and nourish future generations of Oregonians!

Melina Barker
Director, Oregon Farm to School Network