

Submitter: Kristy Athens
On Behalf Of: 12M for Farm to School
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee
On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB5515

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

12 March 2025

Co-Chairs Senator Sollman and Representative Ruiz and members of the
Committee:

I am testifying today in support of funding for the Farm to School Grant Program included in the Oregon Department of Education's budget at \$12 million dollars. This represents a 9% increase from the current service level. This Grant program provides funding for schools and early childhood education programs to purchase Oregon foods, hands-on farm and garden education programs and technical assistance for the farm to school community. This past biennium, there were over \$15 million dollars of requests for this funding. With increases in costs of food, supplies and staffing over the past few years, this modest increase is needed simply to maintain the current level of programming.

I have support farm to school because it is a program that helps our community in so many ways. Besides providing our kids delicious and nutritious local food, Farm to School builds a strong local food system and supports our local economy. As the owner of a grocery business that works exclusively with small farms, I know how close our farmers and ranchers are to falling behind the 8 ball. They need as many sales outlets as possible. What would Eastern Oregon be without its agriculture??

I ask that you support including this grant program in the Oregon Department of Education's budget at \$12M. Thank you for your time.

Kristy Athens
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