

Submitter: Emilie Chen
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee
On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB5515

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 support farm to school because over \$6M in federal funding for Local Food for Schools has been eliminated by the USDA, and now more than ever we need to increase state funding. Farm to school programming is important for the Oregon regional economy. I have spoken with several food producers and small businesses around the state, and I know that farm to school funding greatly supports their income. It enables them to sell high quality products to schools. And I love knowing that Oregon students will be able to eat much higher quality food compared to the highly processed food I was served as a public school student in California.