

March 16, 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/we support farm to school because... OR have benefited from this grant program through...

I/we support this grant program because....

- **It builds skills for wellness and health in kids and communities**
- **It builds a strong local food system and supports our local economy**
- **Over \$6M in Federal funding for Local Food for Schools has been eliminated by the USDA, now more than ever we need to increase state funding for farm to school**
- **Supports schools as hubs for communities especially during times of crisis such as wildfires and pandemic**

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

Dee Copley,

*Rogue River Garden Club, OSU Jackson County Master Gardener Volunteer
Rogue River, OR*