

Submitter: Will Homer  
On Behalf Of:  
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

March 18, 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 support farm to school for the benefits of shortening the tether between supplier and consumer. There is a mystery to food supply today. Without asking the question of where your food comes from very quickly you will find that your protein may come from half a world away.

I support this grant program because food it is important to feed our children/students the utmost nutrition. A well fed student is a teachable pupil. I have seen it myself in my short stint in coaching adolescents. A small portion of protein is a great tool to make young people less hungry for food and more hungry for learning.

At Painted Hills Natural Beef has a synergistic relationship with the Bend-Lapine School District. The school district provides a predictable market for product that can be stocked at times of lower demand. The relationship is very beneficial for both parties. The program is available for other school districts to participate as well.

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.

Will Homer  
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