

Submitter: Elizabeth Zimbelman

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

3/24/2025

To 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 funding for this grant as it promotes lifelong health behaviors by encouraging children to eat fresh, locally grown foods. It creates hands-on learning experiences for food and nutrition education opportunities, such as school gardens, farm tours, and teaching children where their food comes from. Investing in Farm to School programs helps strengthen local economies by creating reliable markets for their produce.

School acts as a critical food access point, especially for low-income families. Supporting the Farm to School Grant Program means ensuring children have access to fresh, nourishing meals.

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,
Elizabeth Zimbelman
Dietetic Intern and Graduate Student

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