

Submitter: Lindsay Ward
On Behalf Of: 1M for Farm to School
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On
Natural Resources
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB5502

March 24, 2025

Co-Chairs Senator Frederick and Representative Levy and members of the
Committee,

I am writing on behalf of Food Roots, a 501(c)(3) organization, in support of the Farm to School Equipment and Infrastructure Grant Program in the Oregon Department of Agriculture's budget. This Grant program provides funding for food producers to access necessary equipment to meet the demands of the school marketplace.

Food Roots connects local producers and local schools, providing procurement assistance, and invoicing and delivery services. I support this grant program because there is a significant need for Oregon-based food producers to be equipped to meet the growing demand from schools for local products. Schools and child care centers have specific requirements for products in regards to quantities, delivery, storage, and food safety. This ODA funding is critical for small-to-medium-scale producers who follow ethical and environmentally sustainable farming and processing practices to be able to scale to provide the quantities needed by the schools. Local farms are a vital resource in geographically isolated and rural regions such as Tillamook County. Getting enough food in during health and environmental crises has proven to be challenging in recent years, and our community can only survive if growing support can be given to farmers consistently in times of non-crisis. In addition, locally sourced food has also proven to have higher nutrition levels than that of foods transported long distances from other agricultural regions. This makes ODA funding also important to improving childhood health.

I respectfully ask that you support this grant program in the Oregon Department of Agriculture's budget at \$1 million. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Warmly,

Lindsay Ward
Food Roots
Tillamook, Oregon