

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

Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Natural Resources  
Oregon State Capitol  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301

March 3, 2025

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

I am writing on behalf of Valley Flora Farm 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.

I run a highly diversified produce farm on the southern Oregon coast, a region where  
there are very few fresh market vegetable farms. For the past twenty-seven years we  
have been providing seasonal produce to the community via various local outlets,  
including stores and restaurants, foodbanks, our farmstand, and a Community  
Supported Agriculture program. Over the years we tried repeatedly to work with  
schools, but we always hit a dead-end due to the limited staff and financial resources  
that rural, self-operated food service programs grapple with.

Then, in 2024 we received an ODA Farm to School Equipment Grant to purchase a  
variety of equipment intended to help streamline our production and bring greater  
efficiency to our post-harvest systems (harvest bins, delivery containers, rolling  
dollies, a barrel washer, and a spading machine). This cost-saving equipment  
enabled us to offer produce at a lower price to local schools and catalyzed first-time  
procurement relationships with the 2CJ and Bandon Districts.

Having never succeeded in this before, we've been thrilled that the ODA grant helped  
us gain access to this new and important market. Additionally, it's particularly  
gratifying to know that the kids can now connect the greens, radishes, and carrots at  
the salad bar straight back to the farm. We've been engaged in farm to school  
education for two decades, hosting hundreds of school fieldtrips on the farm, during  
which kids get to taste produce straight out of the field and learn about production.  
Finally, that on-farm experience can link right back to the lunch room.

The ODA Farm to School Equipment and Infrastructure Grant has been a win-win for our entire community - supporting the economic bottom line of the farm, enhancing the school lunch menu in the cafeteria with fresh vibrant veggies, and bringing greater food and farming awareness to students and school staff.

I ask that you support this grant program in the Oregon Department of Agriculture's budget at \$1 million. Thank you!

Zoë Bradbury DeSurra