

Submitter: Miranda LaFond
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 Education
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

March 2, 2025

Co-Chairs Senator Sollman and Representative Ruiz and members of the Committee

I am writing on behalf of Camas Swale Farm in support of the Farm to School Grant Program in the Oregon Department of Education's budget. This Grant program provides critical 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. We are requesting funding at \$12 million which represents a modest 9% increase from current service level. 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. This funding will support dependable business relationships between schools and food producers and maintain consistent educational programs that connect students to agriculture and nutrition.

Our farm has worked with the 4J school district in Eugene over the past several years. In 2024 our sales to this district totaled \$7,000—comprising broccoli, bell peppers, tomatoes, and other nutritious peak summer crops. Not only did this sale support the operations of our farm, it reinforced our mission to provide food for our community.

At a January meeting between local school district nutrition services workers and farmers, we ate a meal prepared by a 4J chef which included peppers we had sold them months ago. We learned that a large portion of the peppers we sold to the district in September were processed and frozen, enabling extended storage and varied use of our produce.

As a small, local, organic family farm and parent of two school-aged children who will enter these districts I support this grant program. Buying locally sourced food makes us more resilient as a community to the dangers of supply chain disruptions. It

increases the nutritious offerings for growing kids and connects them to agricultural work going on in their immediate community. It keeps more money in our local food economy while enabling farmers to continue to be stewards of our valley's soil.

I ask that you support including this grant program in the Oregon Department of Education's budget at \$12 million so this program can continue to support healthy kids, schools and communities. Thank you for your time.

Amber Lippert and Miranda LaFond
Co-Owner and Employee
Camas Swale Farm
Eugene, OR