

Submitter: Linea Andersen
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

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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 because it is an important program to strengthen the local foodway in Oregon, and ensure access to healthy, nutritious, and varied food for Oregon Students.

Having institutional purchasing power ensures that Oregon farms like mine are able to grow our farming operations, which means that we maintain local production capacity. This is especially important in crisis scenarios like natural disasters or the Covid-19 pandemic where large supply chains might be disrupted. Having stable access to locally produced food is more important than ever.

In Lane County, the 4J school district has used this program to increase the amount of food they produce in house from scratch with produce procured from local farms, including mine. It is important to me that this program can continue at the existing service level so school districts in Oregon can continue providing students with fresh produce and introduce them to many different flavors - healthy eating habits are established early and have life-long impacts!

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.

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