

Submitter: Cody Perlmeter

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

03/27/25

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.

The Farm to School program has supported the economic stability and growth of my farm, since we started participating in this program last year.

It means a lot to me to provide produce for our local schools, because I know the food goes to students who may otherwise not have access to eating healthy local foods.

Participating in this program provides important stability to small local farms, because we are able to plant specific crops that the schools have expressed interest and need for, and know we will have a stable buyer, which is a great supplement to the Farmers Market where demand can be a bit more fickle from week to week.

This stability means that I have the confidence and economic resources to expand my production, so we will be able to continue farming and providing produce to our local community.

It is important to keep this program in operation, not just for the future stability of Oregon farms like mine and others like it, but also because we know that healthy eating habits are established in childhood. It is important for me that Oregon schools serve healthy and inspiring food to ensure lifelong curious and healthy eaters.

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.

Cody Perlmeter
Friends and Family Farm
Walton, OR