



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

April 4, 2025

Co-Chairs Senator Lieber and Representative Sanchez and members of the Committee,

I am testifying today on behalf of Seed to Table Oregon in support of funding for the Farm to School Grant Program included in the Oregon Department of Education and Oregon Department of Agriculture budgets. Oregon's Farm to School Programs help schools and early childhood education programs purchase Oregon-grown foods, support hands-on farm and garden education, and provide essential equipment for food producers. These programs play a vital role in building strong local food systems and improving student health.

These programs work in tandem with School Meals for All (HB 3435) to expand free breakfast and lunch to every public school. The virtuous cycle of increased meal service through free meal programs allows districts to source even more fresh, local ingredients for school meals.

We support farm to school because we see a myriad of positive effects on the students in our community, from improved health outcomes and increased vegetable consumption to increased academic performance and outdoor garden spaces bringing classroom learning to life. Seed to Table Oregon has benefited from this grant program by receiving funding to continue our in-depth farm-based education programs for Sisters School District and surrounding communities.

We support this grant program because it builds skills for wellness and health in kids and communities and it builds a strong local food system and supports our local economy. Over \$6M in Federal funding for Local Food for Schools has been eliminated by the USDA, now more than ever we need to increase state funding for farm to school.

This program supports schools as hubs for communities especially during times of crisis such as wildfires and pandemic.

We are asking the legislature to support:



- \$12M for Farm to School in the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) budget
- \$1M for Farm to School in the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) budget
- Fully funding HB 3435, School Meals for All

With the elimination of federal funding sources and the rising costs of food, supplies, and staffing, a modest increase in funding is crucial for the sustainability of this important program.

Sincerely,

Hannah Joseph
Program Director
Seed to Table Oregon
Sisters, OR