

Submitter: Louisa Fuentes  
On Behalf Of: Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs  
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

Joint Committee On Ways and Means  
Oregon State Capitol  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301  
4/04/2025

Co-Chairs Senator Lieber and Representative Sanchez 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 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.

The Warm Springs Early Childhood Education Center has benefited from the Oregon Farm to school program in so many impactful ways. The Oregon Farm to School programs supports food sovereignty and education of Indigenous plants and traditional foods that have sustained our tribal peoples since time immemorial. These teachings are important to me as a nutrition professional serving my tribal community. Through the support of the Oregon Farm to School program the ECE Food Program that I coordinate is able to provide the children with our traditional foods during meal times. The act of serving the youngest members of our community with their traditional first foods is cultural preservation. Through the last couple of years the Oregon Farm to school program has been an amazing ally to the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs by giving our ECE nutrition program a means to not only serve our traditional foods but also to educate our children about our precious first foods and indigenous plant medicines. We have also had the opportunity to connect the children we serve back to the land, through garden curriculum as well as culturally relevant plant teachings through the Tend, Gather,

Grow, curriculum. I am so honored to be a part of helping my tribe carry on our cultural traditions and teachings through food and connection with our land. I also want to thank the Oregon Farm to school program for helping to facilitate a supportive space for these important teachings to our future generations.

Today 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.

Thank you for your consideration,

Louisa Fuentes

Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs ECE Food Program Manager

Warm Springs, OR