

Testimony

**Co-Chairs Senator Monroe & Representative Smith Warner
Education Subcommittee of Joint Committee on Ways and Means**

Submitted by Katie Fast, Oregonians for Food & Shelter

June 21, 2017

On behalf of Oregonians for Food & Shelter, a coalition of natural resource interests, we are writing to express support of HB 2038 with the -11 amendments and funding of the Farm to School Program.

Oregon is leading the Nation for farm to school and farm to garden programs. These programs create opportunities for school districts to provide local products, create economic opportunities for Oregon agriculture and include educational opportunities about Oregon agriculture and how food is grown.

For Oregon farmers, these programs create opportunities to enter local markets and diversify their sales. This program has created important economic relationships between farmers and school districts.

Less than 2% of US citizens raise are engaged in agriculture. Farm to school and garden educational programs create opportunities for Oregon children to learn about Oregon agriculture through food they are eating and/or growing.

HB 2038 would provide funding, in the form of grants administered by Oregon Department of Education, to reimburse school districts for their purchases of Oregon grown and processed foods and for food-based, agriculture-based or garden-based educational activities. The legislation also expands the list of groups that receive the educational activity grants.

Oregon's Farm to School Program is one of those rare programs that bridges urban and rural communities. OFS encourages the passage and funding of HB 2038 with the -11 amendments.