



Education Subcommittee of Joint Committee on Ways and Means
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

June 20, 2017

Dear Co-chairs Senator Monroe and Representative Smith Warner and members of the Committee:

On behalf of Schoolyard Farms, I am writing to express *our strong support for HB 2038*, the Farm to School Bill, and to request that you do all you can to maintain funding for the Program.

HB 2038 maintains 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.

As the Executive Director of Schoolyard Farms, I've seen first hand the power of garden education and providing our most vulnerable children with fresh, healthy food. Every week, I witness students get excited about tasting local vegetables like spinach, radishes and snap peas because this state funding has made it possible for us to offer vegetable tastings in their cafeteria. During the winter, I am asked by students when they can come back out to their school garden because they love it so much. The Farm to School program not only nourishes our kids, it gets them excited about school, which increases their attendance rates, their positive attitudes toward school and their chances of graduating, which I know is a priority of the state. I implore you to advocate for this bill.

Farm to school is one of those rare issues that connects our rural and urban citizens and enjoys bi-partisan support. Let's not be known as the state that canceled a program that is a win-win-win for kids, farmers, and communities.

Please do all you can to preserve funding for this important program!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Courtney Leeds".

Courtney Leeds
Executive Director
Schoolyard Farms