

Feb 13, 2017

Dear Representative Brock Smith and Members of the Committee,

My name is Mary Jacobs and I am a Curry County Master Gardener and I head the Riley Creek Garden Committee.

I'm writing to ask you to support HB 2038, to preserve or expand funding for Oregon's Farm to School and School Garden programs. I would have liked to be there with you in person for the hearing but I wasn't able to make the trip.

This program is important to me because it helps kids, farmers, and Oregon's economy, all at once. Specifically, I have seen it make a difference for the elementary school children of Curry County. They are eating more fresh vegetables because of this program and learning to discriminate between vegetables harvested on the same day they are eaten compared with those shipped a long way and stored until needed. They are eating less canned food and more fresh. Some are learning that food can come from their efforts rather than a food bank.

The Food Corps person (Amelia Clements), Cathy Boden, and I frequently bring students out to the Riley Creek garden. There kids help plant, weed, discover, and harvest. Cutting funding will greatly diminish this program. Without Farm to School and School Garden funding, the school garden maintenance would be completely dependent on volunteers. There would be almost no educational component to the program.

Curry kids love to come to the garden. They are hungry for fresh food and thrilled to be picking their own. We have started a program of growing hydroponic lettuce and bring lettuce into the cafeteria on a weekly basis. The kids recognize "their lettuce" and eat it first.

I appreciate your support in the past for funding. You have helped us create an outdoor classroom in the garden. Past funding has contributed to gardens, food, and healthy eating becoming included in the curriculum. Thank you for the consideration and for your service.

Mary Jacobs
P.O. Box 135
Ophir Or.