

Wheeler Derrick

From: Shaili Parekh <shailipar@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 13, 2017 4:10 PM
To: HAGNR Exhibits
Subject: HB 2038

Dear Representative Clem and Members of the Committee,

My name is Shaili and I am from Bend, Oregon.

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. I work with schools in Sisters, Oregon, and I have seen first hand how a combination of nutrition education, hands on gardening, and school lunches that source from local farms has impacted the eating habits in children.

Because of Farm to School funding, the cafeterias I work with are able to incorporate so much more fresh local produce than without it - something that not only benefits growing kids but also their communities. I have seen picky children who say they won't eat any vegetables other than potatoes slowly start to come around to butternut squash, kale, and broccoli because of nutrition education programs that are supported by Farm to School. While this may seem trivial, kids get 1/3 of their calories from school meals. The foods kids are exposed to from a young age and their literacy surrounding food will have huge impacts on their health as adults. Knowing how to grow and cook food are two very basic skills that increasingly more Americans do not possess, something directly correlated to diet-related disease. For that reason, Farm to School funding or lack thereof will have a huge impact on the next generation of Oregonians.

Thank you for the consideration and for your service.

Shaili Parekh