

Chair Clem and Members of the Committee,

Hello, my name is Lecia Schall and I am from Portland, Oregon, originally from Newberg. As a substitute teacher in many Multnomah and Clackamas county school districts, I see a variety of school food service offerings. The selection certainly varies school to school from standard processed foods to fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains, dairy and meats. My observations show that the students who have fresh, "real" local foods eat more and waste less. The schools which provide a "salad bar" choice of fresh foods seems to have less go into the garbage. For example, I was at an East county school this week where they had to limit the amount of fresh (frozen) berries because they were so popular. They also served a Local Chilli which was fresh and delicious and chosen over the other standard hamburgers and PB&Js.

From my observations, there is more interest in where the food comes from in those schools which provide a featured vegetable, or which have posters which feature a product of the month. It is also exciting to see that many of the students have School gardens where they can see the produce being grown and can integrate what they do into their learning of new foods, cultures, and community services.

Therefore, I'm writing to ask you to support HB 2579, to expand funding for Oregon's Farm to School and School Garden programs. This program is important because it helps kids, farmers, and Oregon's economy, all at once. Specifically, I have seen it make a difference for lower income children in East Multnomah County, where there are food deserts, and access to quality fresh fruits and vegetables while shopping, is not as easy as those more close in. Having grown up in Newberg, I saw directly how and where the food that I was eating, came from. That is not the case in many suburban schools.

As a science teacher, I believe the more the students can learn about the direct connection from producers and consumers the better off our whole society and environment will be. By supporting the codependence of farmers, growers, cafeterias, and students, we are closing the loop and reducing waste and detachment. The urban rural divide in Oregon needs to become more integrated; what better way to accomplish that task, than by connecting local students with local farmers.

Thank you for the consideration and for your service.

Lecia Schall, NE Portland