

To: Chair Clem and Members of the Committee

I am a teacher with Greater Albany Public Schools and a grandparent of two students in Corvallis. I am writing on my own behalf with knowledge of school systems, curriculum, and student development.

I'm writing to strongly encourage you to support HB 2579, to expand funding for Oregon's Farm to School and School Garden programs. Farm to School Programs support students, farmers and communities. Specifically, I have seen school gardens make a difference for students in Garden Classes as they plant then see their food grow, often for the first time, from seed to harvest. The entire school community has seen benefits from students preparing and sampling foods grown in the school gardens. The school garden produce is also prepped, cooked and eaten in Home Ec class as well as being served in the school cafeteria.

Some students know only what they see in the grocery store, whether they live in an urban or rural setting, although the former typically have less exposure to garden fresh produce.

One of my students disliked garden radishes when first sampled and now insists their mother buy fresh radishes at the grocery store. Another student began preparing a Tuna macaroni salad each week for their family at home after this recipe with fresh carrots, peppers and onions was demonstrated and sampled in Garden class. So many more stories prove the existing data that show that young people are more likely to eat fresh fruit and vegetables if they have been involved in growing them in the garden.

I am grateful for you considering this bill and my request to support it. Your service to our state and the people of Oregon is greatly appreciated.

Respectfully,

Mallory Marquet  
Corvallis, OR