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GROWING GARDENS

February 28th, 2019

Chair Clem and Members of the Committee,

I am the Director of the "Youth Grow" program at Growing Gardens and am writing on behalf of our organization. I'm writing to ask you to support HB 2579 and the - 2 Amendments, to expand funding for Oregon's Farm to School and School Garden programs.

Our program has benefitted from the Farm to School education grant, in two funding rounds, so I have directly seen the benefits of this this legislation. Each year we educate nearly 3000 students at low income schools, using school gardens as a living classroom. We teach hands-on science, ecology and nutrition lessons while highlighting locally-grown fruits and vegetables.

For example, a few weeks ago Growing Gardens and FoodCorps passed out shredded red and golden beets at Scott School in NE Portland. We highlighted the roasted Farm-to-School beets on the lunch line and showed kids bunches of uncut beets with their leafy greens. When asked what they were, kids guessed, "Lettuce?", "Carrots?", "Radishes"? "Potatoes?" After trying the shredded beets, most kids gave them a thumbs up. In fact, one boy said it was "One thousand thumbs up!" Other students commented, "This would go good with salad, can I go get some salad?", "I love your shredded beets!", "Beets taste good on pizza," and "Golden beets are the bomb!"

As any parent or teacher can attest, getting children excited about eating healthy food is equally as important as having it on the lunch line. Thank you for considering expanding Farm to School and School Garden programs which benefit public health, enrich education, build community and strengthen Oregon's economy.

Sincerely,

Anna Garwood
Youth Grow Program Director
Growing Gardens
Portland, OR

We help people grow their own food!

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