

Gwynne A. Mhuireach, Black Tansy Farm, Springfield, OR 97478

Education Subcommittee of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means

May 31, 2019

Co-Chairs Frederick and McLain and Members of Committee:

I am a parent of two children in the Springfield School District and an owner of Black Tansy Farm, a small family-run farm committed to providing high quality, healthy local foods to our community. I am writing on behalf of myself as a parent, as well on behalf of Black Tansy Farm. I ask you to support HB 2579 and the most recent Amendments, to expand funding for Oregon's farm to school and school garden programs. HB 2579 expands funding for schools to buy Oregon foods and for farm- and garden-based education.

Farm to School programs support students, farmers and communities, which makes a huge impact on Oregon's economy and the health of our citizens. At Black Tansy Farm we strongly believe that experience with food production through local farms and gardens is a vital part of becoming a healthy, productive, and well-adjusted member of society. Unfortunately, few children nowadays have opportunities to work with plants, soil, and livestock, so these programs help bridge the urban-rural divide among our schoolchildren. Even more problematically, access to fresh healthy produce can be limited in some regions. Bringing food production to schools and supporting partnerships with local farms is one way to promote equitable access for children of all socioeconomic groups, while empowering Oregon farmers. Please do all you can to advance and fully fund HB 2579!

Thank you for your consideration and your service.

Sincerely,

Gwynne Á. Mhuireach
Black Tansy Farm