



Education Subcommittee of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means

Date 6/4/2019

Co-Chairs Frederick and McLain and Members of Committee:

I am a parent in the Corbett Oregon School District, and a long-term agricultural employee. I am currently employed by Top Hat Mushrooms, an organic Shiitake Mushroom farm in Salem. Previously I worked at Organically Grown Company as a salesperson for 19 years. While at Organically Grown I was responsible for many farm to school sales.

I'm writing to 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. I have seen these programs make a difference to the farms, all those involved in working with the farm, and our children. Not only do the children get fresh, regionally grown food, additionally they learn that their food doesn't come for a refrigerated cooler in a supermarket but from a farm. I have noticed that they talk to their parents about where their farm fresh food is coming from, helping to bridge the urban/rural divide in Oregon as the parents realize these local farms are part of their children's lives and health. The funds that allow schools to prioritize Oregon grown produce really helps get additional businesses aware of the benefits of working with schools providing more opportunity for all kinds of future business relationships that are locally focused.

Please do all you can to advance and fully fund HB 2579.

Thank you for the consideration and for your service.

Bill Lakey

Sales Manager

Top Hat Mushrooms

**Top Hat Mushrooms**  
39344 Jordan Rd. Scio, Oregon 97374  
Phone: 503-394-3060