

Tri-Chairs Johnson, Steiner-Hayward and Rayfield and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means.

My name is Aliesje King and I am testifying on behalf of Sauvie Island Center, to ask you to restore funding for the Oregon Farm to School Grant Program.

Farm to School Grants provide funding for schools to purchase healthy, local foods and provide farm and garden based education. These grants are leveraging and keeping millions of federal dollars in Oregon, supporting local farmers and connecting kids to Oregon agriculture.

This program has directly benefited Sauvie Island Center by providing funding for over 5 Metro region school districts, 15 or more schools per year, and connecting with both K-5 grade students, middle school students, college students, families and community members. Annually we provide programming for 2000 students per year, and even during the pandemic we were, because of Farm to School funding, able to provide virtual farm-centered programming to 1,793 students. Through the Farm to School funds we have the honor to provide science education and hands-on learning to students who would not be able to attend our programs based upon the resources of their schools (Title 1 Schools), and have maintained relationships with teachers for multiple seasons, offering opportunities for them to enhance the learning they are teaching in the classroom with tactile and applicable lessons. We also have had the means to send students home with fresh local produce to share with their families. Beyond our based and hands-on farm field trips, we have also had the opportunity to explore community based learning opportunities, both virtual and in-person programming, professional development in agriculture and education opportunities throughout the year. Our programs reach learners of all ages, and span three counties and reach both rural and urban communities.

Please do all you can to restore funding for the Oregon Farm to School Grant Program to the levels of the last biennium, which was \$15 million. Thanks for the opportunity to testify.