

Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Natural Resources
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

March 15th, 2023

Co-Chairs Senator Dembrow and Representative Pham and members of the Committee

I am writing on behalf of Mama Tee's Farmstead in support of the request to include the Farm to School Equipment and Infrastructure Grant Program in the Oregon Department of Agriculture's budget. This Grant program provides funding for food producers to access necessary equipment to meet the demands of the school marketplace.

Mama Tee's grows a variety of vegetables and fruit. We received this grant funding in 2020/21 allowing us to extend growing seasonal vegetables and fruits for Willamina and Sheridan School Districts. By extending our season both in early spring and late fall, we can produce more vegetables and fruits during the school year. This has helped us increase our sales to these districts and bring more local fruits and vegetables into these schools.

There are so many reasons we support this grant program. Here are just a few:

1. It addresses a significant barrier for small and mid-sized producers selling to schools.
2. By growing the connection between Oregon farmers and other food producers to Oregon schools, we are supporting Oregon's farm and food economy, strengthening kids' knowledge to where and how their food is grown, and building resiliency in communities across the state.
3. And, in our particular case, it helps increase access to fresh, local, and healthy vegetables and fruits to all students living in these high-poverty communities.

I ask that you support including this grant program in the Oregon Department of Agriculture's budget at \$500,000 as previously requested in ODA's Agency Request Budget. Thank you for your time.

Carrie Sendak
Mama Tee's Farmstead
Willamina, OR