

Submitter: Meg Whiteford

On Behalf Of: Umpqua Valley Farm to School

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Education

Measure: HB5014

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

4/21/2023

Co-Chairs Senator Frederick and Representative McLain and members of the Committee

I am writing on behalf of Umpqua Valley Farm to School and the Phoenix School Garden in support of the Farm to School Grant Program in the Oregon Department of Education's budget. This Grant program provides critical funding for schools and early childhood education programs to purchase Oregon foods, hands-on farm and garden education programs, equipment and infrastructure for food producers and technical assistance for the farm to school community. Sustaining the current level of \$10.2 million dollars will support dependable business relationships between schools and food producers and maintain consistent educational programs that connect students to agriculture and nutrition

As the new Farm Manager of the Phoenix School Garden in Roseburg, Oregon- a program funded by this grant program I support this grant program because I see the positive skills that the kids in this community can gain from the programs being supported by this grant program. Phoenix School is a charter school for kids in grades 8-12 who have a difficult time in the public school system and need extra support. This farm to school grant program is funding my position as the Farm Manager, who will lead a team of 5-7 students to gain work experience by being hired on and trained as Farm Crew members. Not only will this give them a head start into meaningful work, but it will introduce healthy foods and an ethic of respect for hard work.

I ask that you support including this grant program in the Oregon Department of Education's budget at the current level of \$10.2 million so this program can continue to support healthy kids, schools and communities. Thank you for your time.

Meg Whiteford
Umpqua Valley Farm to School/Phoenix School

Roseburg, OR