



March 25, 2025

To: Joint Committee on Ways & Means Subcommittee on Education

From: Oregon Organic Coalition

RE: Support for SB 5515 – Farm to School

Dear Co-Chairs Senator Sollman and Representative Ruiz and members of the Committee:

My name is Amy Wong and I am the Director of the Oregon Organic Coalition (OOC). Incorporated in 2008, the OOC works to promote the growth of Oregon's organic industry and community. By bringing together farmers, businesses, and affiliated organizations, OOC provides leadership, advocacy, and support to expand the organic sector, while building resilient regional food systems.

I am writing today in support of funding for the Farm to School Grant Program included in the Oregon Department of Education's budget at \$12 million dollars. This 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. Many of the farms that participate in this program are organic or use organic practices and the OOC recently helped to bring new producers to the Oregon Farm to School Showcase in Salem.

This past biennium, there were over \$15 million dollars of requests for this funding. With increases in costs of food, supplies and staffing over the past few years, this modest increase is needed simply to maintain the current level of programming. It is also critical that Oregon step up to increase state funding for Farm to School as over \$6 million in Federal funding for *Local Food for Schools* has been eliminated by the USDA.

Oregon is fortunate to have an incredibly strong Farm to School ecology, something that has taken years to build. Both sides will lose if this programming goes away.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amy Wong", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Amy Wong

Oregon Organic Coalition - Coalition Director