

Submitter: Patrick Newson
On Behalf Of: 1M for Farm to School
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Natural Resources
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB5502

On behalf of the school districts, students, and especially farmers that I work with directly throughout Lane, Linn, Benton, Marion, Polk, and Yamhill counties, I implore you to increase funding for the ODA Farm to School Equipment and Infrastructure Grant by \$500,000 to \$1M over the next biennium. As a farmer and community organizer, I have seen the impact that this grant funding can bring to small growers so that they can scale-up and more regularly support institutional markets such as schools. For a small farmer, the influx of \$10-20k (average award) can be significant in terms of increasing the capacity for growing food on a local scale. By making these funds more widely available to a broader segment of the farming population around the state, the ability for these producers to develop the systems necessary to provide a more significant amount of food to their immediate communities and school districts. Each applicant is required through the process to engage in forward contracts and / or letters of intent to buy, ensuring that the funds go to farms that participate in direct farm to school sales, and each season I hear from farmers that they could use this tool or this bit of infrastructure that would be impactful in their ability to serve and execute those contracts. In the regions I support for farm to school alone, over a dozen producers have expressed interest in increasing their production to provide more food to schools. Increasing funding for this grant program, by only \$500k would allow for greater participation throughout the Willamette Valley as well as the rest of the state.

Please increase this funding for the F2S Infrastructure and Equipment Grant. Several handfuls of farmers are interested in growing more food for the young people in their communities and this would directly support them in doing so.