



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

**3/25/25**

Co-Chairs Senator Frederick and Representative Levy and members of the Committee,

My name is Aaron Poplack, and I am the Oregon Impact and Partnership Lead at FoodCorps. I am also a lifelong Oregon resident, and a former Portland Public Schools student. I am writing on behalf of FoodCorps **in support of the Farm to School Equipment and Infrastructure Grant Program being included at \$1million 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.

[FoodCorps](#) is a national non-profit with a vision for every child to experience the joy and power of food in school. For 13 years we have partnered with Oregon communities to place emerging leaders in schools to teach food and nutrition education, support school gardens, and introduce children to nutritious foods in the cafeteria setting by encouraging them to try new things. Annually, we have 7 FoodCorps AmeriCorps service members who support access to food education and nourishing school meals in over 33 high need schools across 6 school districts in Oregon.

All of our school partners rely on Oregon's Farm to School Purchasing grants to help them buy foods from Oregon producers. What we know from supporting them in this purchasing is that there is a significant need for food producers to be equipped to meet the unique needs of schools, alongside their growing demand for local products. **The Producer Equipment Infrastructure Grants addresses a significant barrier for small and mid-sized producers in selling to schools** by providing them with capital intensive equipment, like washing and packing stations, cold storage, season extension, and warehouse capacity. These investments allow producers to meet the market demand for local food.

**FoodCorps is proud to be part of a broad coalition of over 62 school districts and organizations who support including this grant program in the Oregon Department of Agriculture's budget at \$1 million.** Now is the moment to invest in infrastructure that

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supports Oregon farmers, ranchers, fishers, and food businesses in ensuring that their capacity to meet the needs of school buyers continues to grow.

Sincerely,

**Aaron Poplack**

Oregon Impact and Partnership Lead, FoodCorps

Portland, Oregon

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