

Submitter: Bella Grubb
On Behalf Of: Rogue Valley Farm to School
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

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

04/14/2025

Co-Chairs Senator Lieber and Representative Sanchez and members of the Committee

I am testifying today in support of funding for the Farm to School Grant Program included in the Oregon Department of Education and Oregon Department of Agriculture budgets. Oregon's Farm to School Programs help schools and early childhood education programs purchase Oregon-grown foods, support hands-on farm and garden education, and provide essential equipment for food producers. These programs play a vital role in building strong local food systems and improving student health.

These programs work in tandem with School Meals for All (HB 3435) to expand free breakfast and lunch to every public school. The virtuous cycle of increased meal service through free meal programs allows districts to source even more fresh, local ingredients for school meals.

I support farm to school because it builds skills for wellness and health in kids and communities, it builds a strong local food system and supports our local economy, and it increases awareness of agricultural careers/lifestyles for children. The world needs farmers. Farmers need the world to remember that ag work is noble and necessary. Farm to school programs are a win-win-win--the earth benefits, the people benefit, and there is enough for all.

I support this grant program because over \$6M in Federal funding for Local Food for Schools has been eliminated by the USDA, now more than ever we need to increase state funding for farm to school. In numerous ways Oregon stands out among the 50 states for its beauty, its resources, and its programs that ensure protection of unalienable rights such as rights and access to healthcare and medical freedom--it's great to have these programs in place but in a world that is increasingly becoming aware of the fact that our health begins with what's on our plates, let Oregon once again be a beacon for community, health, and robust economy that is grounded and

anchored by the hard work of its citizens and landscapes.

We are asking the legislature to support:

\$12M for Farm to School in the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) budget

\$1M for Farm to School in the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) budget

Fully funding HB 3435, School Meals for All

With the elimination of federal funding sources and the rising costs of food, supplies, and staffing, a modest increase in funding is crucial for the sustainability of this important program.

Bella Grubb

Rogue Valley Farm to School

Jacksonville, OR