

Submitter: Amy Honts  
On Behalf Of: 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

April 15th, 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.

We have benefited from this grant program through tasting tables, local procurement in meal programs & garden classrooms.

I/We support this grant program because

- it builds skills for wellness and health in kids and communities.
- it brings local food into the school meal programs & teaches the younger generation where our food comes from and what it takes to grow, raise &/or source it.
- 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.

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.

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