



NEWS

Oregon Legislature - House Democratic Caucus

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Contact: Geoff Sugerman (503) 986-1907

Michael Cox (503) 986-1904

Farm to School Act Passes House Committee

House Bill 2800 connects Oregon farms with school cafeterias

Salem – The House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources approved the Oregon Farm to School Act today, sending the innovative program to Ways and Means for budgetary approval. Sponsored by Representatives Brian Clem (D-Salem) and Tina Kotek (D-N/NE Portland), the bill leverages state dollars to invest federal School Nutrition Program to buy local produce and food products.

“By reimbursing schools for money spent locally, we can turn 15 cents spent on Oregon grown food into 30 cents. This doubles the economic development impact of the investment at a time when we need creative solutions to leverage state dollars into more jobs and more growth,” said Rep. Clem.

House Bill 2800, a version of the policy sponsored by Representatives Clem and Kotek during the past two legislative sessions, would allow school districts to receive grants for reimbursement of up to 15 cents per meal for National School Lunch Program money spent to buy foods produced or processed in Oregon. The program requires that money received in reimbursement is also spent on Oregon food.

“There’s nothing better than seeing a kid eating a pear as part of a healthy school lunch, until you see that kid eating an Oregon pear that created a job at the orchard in Medford,” said Rep. Kotek.

According to data from the 2007 pilot programs in Portland Public Schools and Gervais School District, every dollar spent in the Farm to School program has a 1.86 economic multiplier. In addition, there is an estimated 2.67 multiplier effect in employment. As a result, proponents argue that even a minimal investment of state dollars through House Bill 2800 would result in a significant impact to Oregon’s economy.

House Bill 2800 now moves to the Joint Committee on Ways and Means for budgetary approval.

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