



## SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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### NEWS RELEASE

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CONTACT: Molly Woon (503) 986-1074  
[molly.woon@state.or.us](mailto:molly.woon@state.or.us)

#### **Farm to School bill on the way to Governor** *HB 2800 received unanimous bipartisan support in the Senate*

SALEM – The Senate unanimously approved a “Farm-to-school” bill this morning, allowing more Oregon school to participate in programs that provide local healthy food options while supporting local farms. House Bill 2800 will create a grant program administered by the Department of Education to support the purchase of local foods for Oregon schools and educational activities related to Oregon agricultural products.

“This program will help feed kids nutritious meals while shaping long-term healthy eating habits,” said Senate Majority Leader Diane Rosenbaum (D-Portland), a member of the Oregon Hunger Task Force. “Oregon is fortunate to have an agricultural bounty that other states envy. We should take advantage of this resource and teach Oregon students about the benefits of locally-sourced food.”

“Farm-to-school” programs enable schools to offer fresh, locally-sourced products in their cafeterias. They also encourage the design of corresponding hands-on curricula that may include farm visits, gardening, cooking, composting, and recycling. These programs aim to promote mutually beneficial educational and economic development by focusing on children’s long-term health habits and academic achievement while supporting local farmers and food processors, both big and small.

“The Farm to School program represents what’s so great about Oregon’s abundance,” said Senator Chris Edwards (D-Eugene), sponsor of the bill. “This bill provides our children with the fresh, locally grown, highly nutritious food, while helping our local farm economy. A real win win.”

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.

“As a member of the Oregon Hunger Relief Task Force, I know that in this tough economy many parents have to rely on meals and snacks provided at schools. For them, and everyone else, HB 2800 will mean more of our children have nutritional breakfasts, lunches, and snacks each day at school,” said Senator Jackie Dingfelder (D-Portland).

The bill now goes to the Governor for his approval.

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