

**TO:** Chair Clem, and members of the House Committee on Rural Communities, Land Use, and Water

**FROM:** Peter Truitt  
Truitt Family Foods  
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Phone: 503.371.2106  
**DATE:** March, 19 2015  
**RE:** Written testimony in support of HB 2721

Dear Chair Clem, and members of the House Committee on Rural Communities, Land Use, and Water,

For the record, my name is Peter Truitt, owner and President of Truitt Family Foods in Salem, Oregon and with me I have Michelle M. Ratcliffe, PhD, Farm to Table Specialist at Truitt Family Foods. We are here in support of HB 2721.

Truitt Brothers which has been in operation in Salem for 40 years, recently evolved into two separate entities. Truitt Brothers Inc. develops co-packed products and Truitt Family Foods developed branded products with a consumer focus in both consumer and retail markets with deep roots in Oregon's farm to school initiative, now in its 8<sup>th</sup> year.

Over the past year and a half Truitt Family Foods has developed an innovative line of all natural, shelf-stable hummus and white bean puree dippers that are ideal for the retail and airline market, and most significantly for the K-12 school food market. The work the Oregon Departments of Agriculture and Education, the Legislature and community partners have done in developing the K-12 markets through the farm to school programs has transformed school lunch in Oregon, and as a result nationally.

In fact the strides in the K-12 farm to school market and simultaneous changes in the distribution system has fueled the way we think about all of our markets, and how we position ourselves within them. The strength of the K12 market at home and across the country has given us the signal we needed to create the new line of K12 market ready hummus and bean dips. This is a testament to the significance of a state legislative body that is supportive of farm to school, alongside the local market development activities of the state agency and partners in the public and private sectors.

For the foreseeable future, our new line of products will be a very important part of our business, and is made tenusous by episodic grant dollars flowing in and out of school districts. Our situation is not unique. Ingredient supply chains, production practices, and distribution networks require a reliable and on-going quantity of sales. HB 2721 is a meaningful step in the right direction.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. I or Dr. Ratcliffe would be happy to answer any questions.