



ALEX CUYLER

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DATE: March 19, 2015
TO: House Committee on Rural Communities, Land Use and Water
RE: HB 2721, relating to school food programs

Chair Clem and Members of the Committee:

The Lane County Board of County Commissioners regularly identifies priorities for each Legislative Assembly. They identified the Department of Education's farm to school grant funding as a priority for this session due to their adoption of a Community Health Improvement Plan that clearly identifies a suite of programs and priorities aimed at improving health.

Specifically, the language the Board adopted reads in part:

3. Prevent and Reduce Obesity

Strategy 8: Support statewide legislative efforts to fund the Farm to School, Farm to Institution, School Gardens Nutrition Programs, and similar legislative efforts

Additionally, Lane County continues to prioritize, from an economic development standpoint, the improvement of business conditions such that the food and food processing sector continues to grow within the county.

For example, The Regional Food Consortium was convened in late 2011 by the Lane County Community and Economic Development Division. The makeup of the group has evolved over time and now includes representatives from Lane County, the City of Eugene, Lane Workforce Partnership, the Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce, NEDCO, Travel Lane County, the Willamette Farm and Food Coalition, the Willamette Valley Sustainable Foods Alliance, the Oregon Employment Department and industry representatives. The aim of the group is to provide oversight of the creation and implementation of a regional food/beverage cluster development strategy. The group's current focus is on marketing and branding, workforce development, distribution, and infrastructure development.

For these reasons, the Board of Commissioners asks that you support HB 2721 and move this measure to the Ways and Means Committee to work on the actual funding for the measure.

SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY