Representatives Earl Blumenauer and Suzanne Bonamici hosted a day-long series of events to highlight Oregon's agricultural community and its impact on health and the economy. Events included a tour and roundtable with local farmers, an overview of Farm-to-School food programs in the Beaverton School District, and a forum featuring local stakeholders from farms, food production and processing, food service, and hunger-related organizations. The discussion focused on food and agricultural policies under debate for the next Farm Bill.

"The Farm Bill may be one of the most important pieces of legislation many have never heard of," said Blumenauer. "It affects more than just farmers and ranchers, having a profound impact on what we eat and how that food is produced. This summit provides an ideal platform to discuss reform ideas and help craft national agricultural policies that are better for farmers, for consumers, and taxpayers."

"Federal agriculture and nutrition policies affect the lives of every Oregonian," said Bonamici, "Small farms contribute significantly to the economy of Northwest Oregon. They provide jobs and increase access to healthy food while practicing environmental stewardship that makes Oregon a national model for modern food production and distribution. Schools and food banks especially benefit from easy and affordable access to fresh fruit and vegetables, and I hope we can discuss ways to implement these successful programs nationwide."

The day began with a visit to Skyline Farms with a tour and roundtable with local farmers. Next, Blumenauer and Bonamici reviewed the Farm-to-School program at Vose Elementary. The representatives visited during the school lunch period and met with administrators, advocates, and students to talk about FoodHub, an online marketplace used by the Beaverton School District. FoodHub provides an interactive directory of food producers, allowing the district to easily acquire food from as many local sources as possible. The day concluded with a Northwest Oregon Food Summit and town hall with local experts discussing a variety of topics including an overview of Oregon agriculture and production, processing, marketing, fighting hunger, and nutrition and community health.

EXIT

Sasha Birk-Stachon
Violet Radmacher-