

Jon Laraway
1830 Eastside Rd
Hood River OR 97031

AGAINST THIS BILL

I am a 3rd generation pear grower in Hood River for 40 years. Over this time I have experienced many changes in regulations, from food safety to worker protection standards. Every time these new regulations come out, it cost my business money. This latest proposal would add increased costs which I no longer can afford. We just had a grower meeting yesterday where my packing house explained last year's crop will not likely be profitable. Understand that our crops are commodities, and we do not control the price nor can we increase prices of our products to cover increasing costs. Like most businesses, we don't have a big pot of money in the back room to pay for all of these new proposals.

Over the last several years I have invested tens of thousands of dollars to reduce emissions- frost fans to replace diesel orchard heaters, modern tractors which have newer tier engines to meet EPA standards, for example. This tax would take away any incentive for further investment in modern equipment.

I provide labor housing with utilities for all of my workers, free of charge. Increased energy costs for this housing would be a further burden, which I may have to pass on to my workers.

Now we hear there is a proposal to dismantle SAIF, our worker compensation carrier. How many more thousands of dollars in premiums will this add to my expenses?

The legislature needs to come up with solutions which don't constantly add expenses to small businesses that create jobs and add to the economy of Oregon.