

My name is Lesley Tamura and I am the 4th generation in my family to work in agriculture on Oregon, we grow pears in Hood River County. In agriculture, if you break even at the end of the year, you should consider it a good year. More common is finishing the year in various amounts of debt, not because of poor business choices but simply because that is the nature of our industry. We receive wholesale prices for our fruit but pay retail prices for everything we need to run our business. Our financial success is dependent on factors outside of our control, including weather and domestic and global politics. We do not do this job to get rich, we do it because we have a passion for it and want to be good stewards of this beautiful land. Climate change is a crucial issue facing society, and farmers know this better than most. Weather patterns can ruin entire crops before they've even had a change to grow. We as a society must make changes to combat climate change, but implementing costly financial burdens that directly affect our ability to stay in business and continue growing produce for the world to consume is not the answer.

Implementing additional taxes on tires, nonroad diesel equipment purchased/used in Oregon and on dyed diesel will hurt our industry enormously. We require the use of diesel equipment such as tractors for our everyday tasks and cannot function without them. It is not financially possible to replace this equipment with machines that run on other forms of fuel or energy currently, and whatever financial assistance the state might offer through the revenue generated from these taxes will not be nearly enough to offer farmers the amounts they would need.

As a farmer, I am a price taker. This means that I cannot simply push these added costs up the chain to others by increasing the sale price of my crops to account for added costs from these additional taxes. Buyers/consumers set our prices and will buy from other states or countries that sell at a cheaper price, leaving farmers to absorb any added overhead. This is the economic reality that we face every day. Oregon had the greatest increase of all Western states in farm bankruptcies in the past year. With the constantly increasing costs of new taxes such as those proposed in HB 2674, family farms are being forced out of business.

It is my understanding that the Diesel Task Force considered many of these taxes and chose not to proceed because consensus was not reached. The Oregon Legislature should respect the work of the Task Force and not move forward with legislation to impose these taxes. Agriculture is an important part of Oregon's economy, but we cannot continue to survive with so many added financial burdens. Please, support Oregon's agriculture industry and vote no on HB 2674. Thank you for your time and consideration.