

I am writing to you with my concerns about the real impacts of HB 2358 and SB 616 on both my farm and my employees. I am a 5th generation farmer in your district. I grow pears, apples, cherries, and peaches, as well as operate a packing house and fruit stand. We employ approximately 45 year-round employees and an additional 100 employees during our peak season of harvest and packing, many of whom live on our farm or come back year after year.

These bills would require us to pay overtime to employees after 40 hours of work. Currently, agriculture is exempt from overtime pay under the federal Fair Labor Standards Act and in most other states. These bills propose one of the most aggressive overtime policies in the country, which would be devastating for us and our employees. As an orchardist, I am a price taker, which means that I cannot simply increase the sale price of my crops to account for added labor costs. Fruit Buyers and consumers set our prices and will buy from other states or countries that sell at a cheaper price.

I will have to absorb any added overhead. That is the economic reality I deal with every day. The added payroll costs proposed in HB 2358 and SB 616 are astronomical, as it will likely cost me over \$100,000 in new labor costs. To stay in business, I will be forced to limit the number of hours worked by my employees to 40 hours in a week to avoid the added expense of overtime pay. I do not want to do this, and my employees do not want me to do this, but that is the practical reality of these bills.

Our farm employees, many of them 2nd generation on our farm, are at risk of losing their jobs if downsizing is the only option available to run an orchard. We cannot mechanize and we cannot change crops.

As a family business (remember 5th generation), we cannot operate at a loss year-after-year, so we must control costs that seem to increase every year in Oregon. I know it's not the goal of these bills to reduce employee take-home pay, but HB 2358 and SB 616 demand wages that are not possible with the economics of agriculture and will result in reduced pay and hours for farm employees.

This policy has not been well-vetted and will harm those it intends to help. Please oppose HB 2358 and SB 616 this session. These bills would negatively impact not only family farmers and ranchers in Oregon, but also agricultural workers!