

Hari Farm & Nursery
Richard Hari
Salem, Oregon 97305

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Hello,

My name is Richard Hari. I have grown up on the family farm in Salem, Oregon, and have been farming my own crops since 1990. I grow and sell nursery stock, seed crops such as flowers for seed, vegetable seeds, grass seeds, filberts, etc. I employ about eight to ten workers full time, and have additional temporary farm labor of twenty or more during hoeing or harvest. I want to share with you my concerns about the real impacts of HB 2358 and SB 616 on both my farm and my employees.

These bills would require every farm and ranch in Oregon 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 local farmers and our employees.

For many businesses other than farming, if the cost of business expenses goes up, they can increase the cost of their products or services and this can help pay for overtime pay. As farmers, this is where we are different. For many of the crops we grow: We are price takers, and have no means of increasing our income. We cannot raise the price. Crop prices have not kept up with inflation. We are getting nearly the same price as what we got years ago. With the already increased costs in fertilizers, chemical and labor, our margins are not increasing.

If the HB 2358 and SB 616 would pass, we are not sure what we would do. I would really feel bad for the employees, because we would most likely cut their hours. Their take home pay would most likely decrease. Right now, they are counting on the hours and income they are getting. Their budgets depend on this income. This would be a sad situation for them. Some employees will probably leave our farm. At that point, is it worth it for us to continue farming? What happens to the small family farms in Oregon? Most likely large corporate farms will buy out the small family farms. Is the intent of HB 2358 and SB 616 to put the small farms out of business?

I am very concerned that this policy will actually harm those that it intends to help. Please oppose HB 2358 and SB 616 this session. These bills would most likely negatively impact not only family farmers and ranchers in Oregon, but also agricultural workers.

Thank you!
Richard Hari - Hari Farm & Nursery