



NAUMES FAMILY VINEYARDS

March 9, 2021

The Honorable Paul Holvey
Chair, Committee on Business and Labor
Oregon House of Representatives
900 Court St. NE, H-277
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Chair Holvey and Committee Members:

My name is Laura Naumes with Naumes Family Vineyards and I am a 2nd generation farmer. Our Company farms approximately 100 acres of wine grapes in conjunction with our 1400-acre pear orchards of Naumes, Inc. We employ anywhere from 20 to 50 workers depending on the time of year and functions we are performing in the vineyards. We already pay well above the hourly minimum wage for hourly work and the piece rate work is very lucrative for the workers. We provide company housing for many at no cost, health benefits, vacation, paid leave, and sick pay for those who qualify.

Agriculture is a unique business in which we are not able to operate as a factory that creates widgets using 8-hour shifts every day. Our operations are driven by elements of nature. Rain, plant disease pressure, availability of water, ability to irrigate because of rotations from irrigation districts and harvest that cannot be postponed due to hitting a 40-hour work week. There are times in agriculture that we work a lot of hours such as harvest and there are a lot of times when we work very few hours such as winter time. We need flexibility to work longer hours during critical time frames such as harvest and our employees need to be able to work more hours in summer than winter as there is less work in winter.

House Bill 2358 will hurt the very people it assumes it will help. Farmers will need to employ more workers to ensure that the 40-hour week is not exceeded and employees will not get the extra hours that they seek. We highly value our employees, in fact they are like family to us, but the additional costs created by this bill will likely have farmers looking for other options to do farm work such as mechanization. Depending on the crop, this will happen sooner than later and will most likely drive smaller operations out of business.

Naumes Family Vineyards in conjunction with Naumes, Inc. strongly oppose House Bill 2358. This feels like a rush bill with little consideration for the impact to agriculture. It does not appear that anyone has looked at the financial impact on the agricultural sector and I believe this should be an important part of decision making. I would also believe that there is a financial impact to the state of Oregon in administering and overseeing this monumental change in agriculture pay and, as a tax payer, I think it is important to analyze that cost to tax payers.

Sincerely,

Laura Naumes
Naumes Family Vineyards
Vice President & COO

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