



## LatinoNetwork

**Testimony of Anthony Castaneda  
Regarding HB 2813  
House Committee on Business and Labor  
March 17th, 2021**

Chair Holvey, Vice-Chairs Bonham and Grayber, and Members of the House Business and Labor Committee,

**Latino Network supports HB 2813 to ensure that workers are equipped with the tools and resources to perform their job duties safely.**

Latino Network is a culturally specific nonprofit serving children, youth, and families in Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington counties. Every year our organization provides transformative services to thousands of families in the areas of education and mentorship, leadership development, and family stability.

HB 2813 requires employers of employees who engage in outdoor work activities to take certain actions to mitigate employee's risk of exposure to unhealthy air quality from wildfire smoke. This is an important bill and we urge you to vote in favor.

For too long, immigrant and BIPOC workers have borne the brunt of environmental hazards in their daily work. These health risks compound the other forms of exploitation faced by workers of color, especially migrant and immigrant workers.

As a state, we must take steps to ensure that vulnerable workers are not subject to the kinds of conditions we saw just this past summer when our air turned toxic with wildfire smoke, yet farm workers and others continued to labor outside while air pollution levels soared.

HB 2813 requires common sense protections for outdoor workers. Certified respirators, such as N95 masks and other respirators depending on air quality and environmental conditions, are low cost investments in the health and safety of workers. Taking actions early to protect the health and safety of workers will reduce later health-related costs that may arise from prolonged exposure to hazardous air.

Many workers, such as agricultural workers, and their families do not have healthcare coverage through their employer. As a result, migrant and seasonal farmworkers experience higher rates



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of specific health problems such as diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease and cancer than most other Oregonians.

We know that agricultural workers are proud of their work. They are proud to steward and care for our fields and crops that feed and nourish Oregon and the world. Even in the harshest conditions, farmworkers show up on time and stay until the job is done. They are frontline workers who continue to show up despite facing a respiratory pandemic, wildfires, and more recently, a winter storm.

Oregon and the agricultural industry benefit from farmworkers, and their labor is instrumental to the growth of the industry and related industries, such as the agritourism industry. According to OHA, there are roughly 174,000 migrant and seasonal farmworkers, and related family members, that contribute to Oregon's multi-billion dollar agricultural industry.<sup>1</sup>

**Latino Network urges you to vote YES on HB 2813**

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<sup>1</sup> OHA, Vital Role of Migrants in the State Economy.  
<https://www.oregon.gov/oha/HPA/HP-PCO/Pages/Migrant-Health.aspx#:~:text=An%20estimated%20174%2C000%20migrant%20and,multi%2Dbillion%20dollar%20agricultural%20industry.>