

March 24, 2021

House Committee on Business and Labor  
Salem Capitol  
Salem, Or

Dear House Committee members,

I am writing you to **OPPOSE** HB 2358. I believe this would be devastating to Oregon farmers. My husband and I are Organic Dairy farmers in Jefferson County. As you probably already know there is a workforce shortage for agriculture. We are already working 2 fewer employees that we have in the past. We value the 2 employees we have left. We already reward them with housing as well as acreage so they can grow their own beef, chickens and garden. We do what ever we can to keep them happy. Unfortunately, this bill would not make them happy. We would have to keep their hours at 40 per week which means less income for them. I am not sure if you are aware, but our milk price is not set by my farm. We are reliant upon our processor as well as the consumer market to determine our price. I cannot just go and increase the amount of my product to offset such a drastic increase in cost to our farm.

In Jefferson county our farmers are already losing money due to drought and lawsuits regarding our irrigation water. This year is predicting even less water than last year which has left many farmers teetering on the brink of bankruptcy. We have the expense of our irrigation water per acre every year whether we receive our allocated allotment or not. Many of us did not get to irrigate the crops we had in the ground so that meant there was no harvesting which in return required us to layoff employees. This bill is like putting salt in our open wound.

This bill would do more harm than good. All you must do is look to our neighbors to the north as our governor likes to say so often. Check out the dairy industry there. I have firsthand knowledge that there is now an urgent call to have milk robots installed at these dairies. They have decided that it would be more cost effective to invest in a milk robot than to pay employees and their overtime. This then leaves the state with more unemployed persons. The intended good of this bill will have an opposite effect in that it will cost the employees their jobs as well as extra pay that they were receiving due to the overtime hours that will be reduced if not eliminated. We plan on doing the same if this bill passes.

The consequences of this bill are far greater than the benefits. Please vote **NO** on this bill and save jobs that will otherwise be lost.

Sincerely,

Deanna Poland

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