

I am a pear and apple grower in Hood River and Wasco counties. I am writing in opposition to the HB on overtime pay for agricultural workers. I think there is a misperception in Salem that there is some sort of adversarial relationship between farmers and farm workers. In nearly all farms in our area, the bond and friendship between the two are close. There is such a tremendous seasonality to our businesses, that long hours in harvest is a necessity. Because there are not enough workers in agriculture, we must treat our employees with fair pay and respect. Despite the quotations in the Oregonian about low wages in agriculture, it is misleading due to the seasonal work of so many employees. For those who work all year in farming, wages are remarkably higher. I am often paying more than \$300 a day (for 7-8 hours of work) to skilled employees. These employees want to work as much as possible, to make as much as their ambition allows. A lack of overtime rules makes that possible. If I was required to pay overtime, my business would not be sustainable at those wages. Like other employers, I would have to cut my base rates or limit hours to compensate for costs -- at the detriment of the workers who rely on the seasonal boost in cash flow. I understand the idea of overtime wage rules for businesses that require overtime work year-round; but our seasonality demands flexibility -- and ideally, some sort of seasonal exemption. Thank you for your time.