



WONG

Wong Potatoes, Inc, potato grower & shipper, 17600 Hwy 39, Klamath Falls, OR 97603

Potatoes

To Whom It May Concern:

March 23, 2021

In regards to Bill HB 2359 Requires Agriculture Employers to pay Overtime to Employees after 40 hours of work in one week. We oppose this bill as bad for agriculture.

This bill is tough for agriculture employers to pay the extra hours of overtime because As farmers it is hard to get an increase in prices to our current customers because we are In a supply/demand market and competition from other growing areas that compete in the same market, but have less input costs can sell at lesser prices and still make a profit. With this disadvantage we will be forced to grow crops that are less labor intensive or look for ways to reduce labor to compete with other growers.

At this time with increasing minimum wages we have to compete with neighboring states that have lower minimum wages that us now and with overtime added on we will not be able to compete for the same market prices.

Any kind of overtime for farm workers is just a problem for agriculture as we all have Limited time to plant and harvest our crops. In the Klamath area we have a very short growing season so planting in the spring takes lots of hours to get the crop in and we can have a frost every month of the year so we use labor intensive irrigation equipment to keep our potato crops from getting frosted in spring, summer, and fall. Fall Harvest is the same problem as short window to get the crop out of the ground before we get a hard frost that can ruin a crop. This takes a lot of labor in a short amount of time.

As for ROI we do not know for sure what price we will get till after harvest and selling the crop, this makes for a tough sell in a supply/demand market. It is not very easy to get the price u need to break even when there is a lot of supply in the market place.

If all states are on equal wages then the playing field is more favorable to all and we can survive that, but putting us at a competitive disadvantage would only cause us to eliminate the crops that require a lot of labor hours. This would be true to most all crops that require labor to produce food.

Cost of food will have to go up with increases in expenses or farmers will go out of business.

Sincerely:



Daniel Chin

Grower/Shipper Potatoes in Klamath Basin for over 90 years

dchin@wongpotatoes.com

Date: March 29, 2021
To: House Business and Labor Committee
RE: HB 2358

Chair Holvey and Members of the House Business and Labor Committee,

My name is Daniel Chin and I am writing today in opposition to HB 2358. We grow potatoes in the Klamath Basin and have for over 90 years. We grow, wash, grade, and ship organic and conventional fresh market potatoes and ship throughout the US, Canada, and Pacific Rim countries. We also grow rotational crops Dehydrated Onions, Garlic Seed, Alfalfa Hay, Wheat, Barley and Hemp.


We can have frost every month of the year so in Order to protect our potatoes we need solid set irrigation systems to water our potatoes before it Freezes to keep the potato foliage from freezing. This takes a lot of labor to setup the sprinklers, cultivate for weed control and take down the sprinklers in the fall. We have a short growing season In the Klamath Basin so a lot of work that needs to be done in a short amount of time. Planting in May, Irrigation and weeding in June & July, Harvest in September & October before killing frosts can destroy our crops. We need this labor force to get crops grown and harvested. We also grow dehydrated onions and Hemp, these need hand weeding which is very labor intensive. Our farm cannot survive without a good labor force.

Our farm will have a hard time completing with Idaho for our potato market share with this extra labor costs. With a very tight labor force we cannot expect to hire additional people to work a second shift to Try to keep our crops planted and harvested. We have 45 fulltime employees and during harvest time We add another 25 employees to the work force.

We are in a supply/demand market, so when we have an over supply our prices are tough to make a profit on, thus it is hard to raise prices for our crops. With other states competing in the same market With lower hourly wages and no overtime charges they have less production costs and can sell cheaper Than us, which puts us at a huge disadvantage.

I am currently on the Oregon Potato Commission having served 10 years from 1986 to 1996 and currently 2012 to 2021 with being Chairman twice in those years. I take great pride in representing Oregon Potatoes to the world potato consumers. Our Commission feels that as growers of Healthy, Nutritious, and Affordable potatoes, they need to be available to consumers grown in the state of Oregon. We need sound policies and regulations that keep family farms in the business of providing consumers with a great healthy and safe food supply.

As I see this problem unfolding we might be forced into growing less labor intensive crops, to stay in business. This will be bad for a lot of agriculture workers because all farmers like us will have to do the same thing reduce the amount of hours people can work. If u like a good safe, nutritious food supply grown in the USA please help protect the family farms of Oregon, by not imposing this additional hardship on us.

Thank you for your consideration,
Daniel Chin 
Chin Family Farms Organic, LLC.
Klamath Falls, Oregon