



NAUMES, INC.

March 29th, 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 members of the committee,

The proposed HB2358 regarding overtime is a disaster for agriculture and its workforce. Timing of sprays and harvests are critical. We in labor intensive agriculture cannot control what Mother Nature dictates. Often, we have very narrow windows to react to shifts in weather. At times we may have to work 10 or 12-hour days or Saturdays and Sundays. We don't have a choice if we want to have a marketable crop free from bug damage or being over mature. This is just the harsh reality of farming.

It is no secret that labor intensive Oregon agriculture has been struggling to survive even before being hit with mandated higher wage rates, paid time off, sick pay, covid related expenses, and much stricter OSHA rules and regulations especially in the housing and transportation areas.

Here in Southern Oregon our pear industry has seen a dramatic decline in the last ten years and the decline has accelerated in the last two years. At one point there were 12,000 acres of pears in our valley, over 200 growers, and 12 packing operations. Now we are down to 3,000 acres of pears, 6 growers (only 2 of any size) and 1 commercial packing operations.

We in the pear industry are price takers to the whims of a very tough, consolidating marketplace. Prices in the last 10 years that we receive for our products have changed slightly and probably have decreased if you take into account the time value of money. Conversely, the cost of labor, supplies, and materials has skyrocketed.

With another burden like overtime more acreage will disappear. Jobs are not only lost in the pear industry but all the supporting industries – box factories, trucking, and a multitude of other suppliers.

Overtime may well be the final nail in the coffin for the Southern Oregon pear industry. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important matter. We at Naumes, Inc. strongly oppose the HB 2358 which is negative for the workforce and the companies trying to stay in business.

Sincerely,

Michael D. Naumes
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Naumes, Inc.

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