



OREGON
FARM
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and
GROWING STRONG

From the Desk of
Representative
Daniel Bonham

D. Bonham

Vote "NO" on HB 4002B

2/28/2022

HB 4002B is a false promise to Oregon farmworkers and will deliver a death knell to Oregon's fresh fruit, vegetable, and dairy industry. HB 4002B transitions Oregon to an unworkable 40-hour overtime threshold and offers an unworkable and unsustainable tax credit to producers to pretend to soften the blow. It will make both farmers and farm workers lives worse. This is not the Oregon way.

Oregon farmers and ranchers are price takers who compete in a global marketplace. An economic analysis by a firm frequently relied on by this body showed that Oregon farmers cannot afford a 40-hour threshold, and many would have to reduce worker hours, transition crops, or mechanize to avoid paying overtime in order to stay in business. Some would leave Oregon all together. As we have seen in California, workers would likely see their hours and take-home pay reduced, and many will have to get a second job. All for a political talking point.

The tax credits offered to farmers are another empty promise. A capped tax credit functions as a lottery, with some farms losing after they've already incurred increased wages. It is not workable for farmers who use contract labor, and the nearly two-year lag to receive a refund when one is due means that only the largest corporate farms are likely to be able to front the costs for overtime until they can receive their refund. Most critically, tax credits are not recession proof, and it is only a matter of time before it's taken away even without a recession. Tax credits do not heal the deep wounds you will inflict on both farm families and farmworkers if you pass this bill.

There was a workable solution in the -A10 amendment within reach for legislators. The -A10 amendment would have provided overtime pay to workers at 40 hours and higher thresholds for farmers to help contain costs, with the state providing direct payments to farmworkers to bridge the gap between 40 hours and the higher thresholds contained in the amendment. It is a true win-win solution that would result in more money in workers' pockets and protect the viability of Oregon's farms. Feeble protests against the amendment cannot hide the fact that it is a workable solution that would benefit both farmers and farm workers. Instead, you will pass HB 4002B, which hurts both.

We have rarely seen an issue with the potential to devastate local farmers like HB 4002B. This will be THE key vote for OFB this legislative session. Don't pass a bill that hurts both farmers and farmworkers when a viable solution is within reach.

Please Vote "NO" on HB 4002B – Save our Family Farms and our Farm Jobs