

Submitter: Donna Bleiler

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Business and Labor

Measure: HB4002

Big government needs to let free market work. Over protecting immigrants that come to work the fields can sign their own agreement to work longer hours in peak harvest because when the harvest is done, there is no work.

This is a complex issue, made even more challenging by the staggering diversity in Oregon Agriculture (225 different commodities grown!). No two farms are the same, and neither are their staffing requirements—making a one-size-fits-all approach to overtime devastating for most Oregon's farms.

Agriculture is seasonal and dependent on weather windows and limited by the perishability of produce. When fruit is ripe, the job doesn't get done in a typical 9-5 day. Farms can't pass along added labor costs. Unlike most industries, produce prices get set by the commodity market, and prices can't be raised just because our costs go up.

Other states' mandates led to capped hours and lower paychecks. Farms are forced to invest in mechanization and cap employees' hours to reduce labor costs.

Farms will be forced to reduce benefits to offset labor cost increases. Most farms provide benefits beyond an hourly wage, but those incentives are not being considered.

95% of Oregon farms are family-owned businesses. Smaller farms are the least able to absorb added labor costs.