

Submitter: Mark Bigej

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Business and Labor

Measure: HB4002

I am Mark Bigej, a co-owner and COO of Al's Garden Center and Greenhouses, LLC. I am testifying in opposition of HB 4002 as written. As written, this bill will not only harm many of Oregon's agricultural businesses, but their employees as well. According to the Highland Economic Study, the majority of Oregon's farms will NOT be able to afford the increased payroll costs due to overtime pay and would instead limit hours worked by employees, reduce shifts, reduce benefits to offset the added cost, and turn to mechanization to replace labor hours. The net effect will not only be detrimental to farms, but their workers as well. For those farms unable to absorb the increased labor costs or adapt their practices, they will likely be forced to either sell their farm to a larger, corporate producer, or if possible, remove their land from production and develop it. This is exactly what is playing out in California as we are considering this legislation. I encourage Oregon to learn from California's misstep and take a different approach.

I would be in support of a bill that did pay overtime wages at a higher threshold of 56-60 hours with some exceptions for peak season activities. While phase in timelines and tax breaks are well intended, the eventual impact of this bill as written will still be devastating to the entire agricultural community.

I encourage you to oppose this bill as written. I would also encourage you to please consider an alternative proposition that would be a workable solution for farms and workers. A win-win scenario is possible. The current bill as written is not a win-win situation.

Thank you for your time and consideration,  
Mark Bigej