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On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Business and Labor

Measure: HB4002

Oregon agriculture is very diverse. A one-size-fits-all regulation may work for one area but cause massive disruptions in others. Picking berries is different than harvesting apples which is different than harvesting grass seed which is different than milking cows. Nature and the weather dictate the hours of work in agriculture and it's all unique.

Farm work often cannot be scheduled in eight-hour days and 40-hour work weeks. This is not how agriculture works, because it's not how nature works. And harvest seasons are different – some last 6 weeks, others 22 weeks. Unique and diverse industries like agriculture are complex and lifting an exemption that has been in place since 1938 could create devastating consequences for local farms and farm workers.

At this point, it's more likely HB 4002 will ensure seasonal farm workers relying on this work to make a living will make less money when their hours are restricted by the ag overtime bill. Such a bill will cause farmers and ranchers to cut farm worker hours, produce less and charge more for their products. A lose-lose-lose. Or farmers will figure out how to mechanize. A win only for those equipment manufacturers.

As farmers move away from labor-intensive crops - mostly fruits and vegetables - we will see more and more of our food supply coming from other states and countries. I know this is not something Oregonians want, yet it will be a consequence of this bill if it passes.