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J3 Farms Inc.

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RE: HB 4002, Oregon Ag overtime pay exemption

Dear House Committee on Business and Labor,

This letter is being written out of opposition, and concern of how the proposed HB 4002 to remove the Agricultural Exemption for overtime pay in Oregon will impact my business.

My sister and I farm in Marion County. We grow Peppermint, Grass Seed, Sugarbeets, Hazelnuts, Clover, Corn, and Beans. Many of the crops that we grow are very labor intensive. We employ approximately 8-10 full-time employees, many of whom have worked for our family for over 10 years. We also employ an additional 15-20 people during the peak season months.


Oregon farms have been exempt from overtime pay for a variety of reasons. In large part due to the specialized crops we grow that require intense seasonal needs. Today, Oregon farm workers aren't just getting paid minimum wage. The skills needed to do farm work require expertise, and we are willing to pay higher wages and offer more benefits than other lines of work. Being exempt from overtime pay makes it affordable for farms to pay these perks. To remain in business if HB 4002 passes, we will be forced to limit the number of hours that our employees work and mechanize or transition to less labor-intensive crops to avoid the added expense of overtime pay. Mandating overtime pay will result in reduced pay and opportunities for farm employees. **If the bill passes, it will restrict the spending power that our current farm workers enjoy.** I do not want to do this to our loyal, hard-working employees, but that is the practical reality. This bill will likely cost my business thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of dollars in new labor costs and increased mechanization that we simply cannot afford.

The profit margin in farming isn't there to support the large inflation of labor costs if the overtime exemption is taken away. As farmers, we cannot increase the sale price of our crops when our labor costs increase. Consumers in the global commodity market set our prices. Any added costs will have to be absorbed by my family's farm. That's the economic reality for those of us in agriculture.

The proposal of removing Ag exempt overtime pay is not a sustainable one, and I urge you to oppose HB 4002.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



J3 Farms Inc.
Gabrielle Whitaker



J3 Farms Inc.
Dina Jensen

2-7-22
Date