

Submitter: Kevin Loe

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Business and Labor

Measure: HB4002

I grow/raise specialty seed, livestock, and Christmas trees in marion County and employ 17-40 employees, many of whom work year-round on my operation. I want to share with you my concerns about the impact of an ag overtime mandate on my operation and employees.

Livestock operations have unique needs. Cows, sheep and other livestock rely on 24-hour supervision and response and require a flexible workforce year-round. Implementing HB 4002, an overtime mandate at 40 hours, will be difficult if not impossible for livestock producers. How will I care for my animals if an emergency comes up or on the open range? The market doesn't give me the ability to demand a higher price for beef or milk simply because Oregon increases labor costs. Costs for feed, fuel and supplies are skyrocketing. Labor costs come straight from the bottom line at a time when many farms and ranches are struggling to stay afloat. An inflexible 40-hour overtime mandate simply won't work for our industry.

Many employees, particularly those who work with cattle or sheep on the range, choose to work in solitude in remote areas where on-duty time and off-duty time is harder to calculate. Federal law already exempts those principally involved in "range work," because it's such a poor fit for traditional wage and hour requirements. It doesn't make sense to craft a one-size-fits-all policy that will immediately shutter sectors of Oregon agriculture.

At a 40-hour overtime threshold, workers risk losing shifts, total hours and take-home pay. In addition, the new labor costs might cause trade-offs for current benefits like insurance and housing. With increasing labor costs, many producers simply may not be able to continue providing these additional benefits to their workers. Agricultural overtime could have dire consequences for the families who depend on ranches and dairies for their income.

Please oppose a 40-hour overtime mandate for Oregon agriculture under HB 4002. It won't work for livestock producers. Our needs aren't seasonal, and imposing new costs at this difficult time will sacrifice our local, family-owned dairies, livestock operations, and range operations.

You really need to stop and look to see what your rules and regulations over the past 30 years have done to society and learn to leave things alone.

You have created a lazy society of youth that has very little ambition of gain due to not allowing children to work at younger ages that teaches them a work ethic at a

young age that last a life time. Now you are penalizing people who want to work for the one last part of industry that knows how to get things done when they need to. You have seen shelves empty with items being in short supply your next move could create food being empty on shelves.

You are sealing the fate of this country with every new rule and regulation you are imposing on this country that will be the end of America at the rate you are going. Stop the madness and oppose this rule. We are still a free country and free to choose.