

House Committee on Business and Labor,

My name is George Meyer and I farm in Marion and Linn counties. The main things on our farm we grow are grass seed, hazelnuts, green beans for processing and wheat. I have been farming for 43 years and employ 9 employees during the peak harvest. I would like to share some concerns I have with HB 4002 on both my farm and my employees.

Paying overtime to farm worker employees that work over 40 hours sounds really good on paper but the impacts are going to be detrimental. Our base pay for our farm employees is \$18/hr. The pay goes up from there for their experience and qualifications.

Our full time employees get a pickup to drive and a house to live in. We value a pickup at \$600/month and the house at \$1,500/month. These are all perks that are at no cost to the employee. We do consider these perks as part of their compensation.

I will not be able to afford the added payroll costs proposed in HB 4002 as it will likely cost me \$82,500.00 in new labor costs. To stay in business, I will be forced to limit the number of hours worked by my employees to 40 hours in a week to avoid the added expense of overtime pay. I do not want to do this, and my employees do not want me to do this, but that is the practical reality of this bill.

Most of the hours we work overtime are during our peak harvest. Winter months that we are servicing our equipment and working in the shop are at 40 hours a week. During peak harvest we do put in some long hours but both the employees and myself know those are short lived periods. We give it our all to provide food for our country.

The work force in my opinion that will hurt the most if this bill passes will be the migrant workforce that is working for labor contractors. Those are unskilled labors that spot spray off variety grasses and trim our hazelnut orchard. We pay the labor contractor \$19.50/hr. per employee. If we had to pay over time that would increase their pay to \$29.25/hr. per employee after the initial 40hrs worked. We can't afford to pay over time on this workforce. Myself, and my full time workers work along side these workers when we have them out on our farm. We have asked questions and got to know their story and why they are working here in Oregon. We met a schoolteacher from Guatemala that was working as many hours as he could to send money back home. Husband and wife that were from the southern part of Mexico again, working as many hours as they could to take the money back home. We don't normally work 6 days a week in the winter but these people begged us.

This year we are experiencing the highest increase in our inputs. Our fertilizer has increased 135%, some herbicides we use have went up 131%, can't even get a quote on roundup because it is so hard to get right now. Every American is experiencing higher gas and diesel prices. Our farming operating uses a minimum 15,000 gallons of diesel a year. That commodity too has gone up 42%.

As farmers we are price takers. We don't get to pass along the added costs to our consumers. We are the only occupation that buys at retail and sells at wholesale. Please oppose this HB 4002 this session. This bill will negatively impact not only family farmers and ranchers in Oregon, but also agricultural workers

Thank you,
George Meyer