



OPPOSE HB 4002: PRESERVE OREGON LIVESTOCK JOBS

Beef, dairy and sheep are among Oregon's top commodities. Our livestock growers provide vital jobs, conservation work and a range of products from across our state. Implementing overtime at 40 hours is very difficult for livestock producers. It could have dire consequences for Oregonians who depend on raising and caring for animals for their income as well as risking our working lands and rural economies. Traditional range production would no longer be viable for many of our producers and new, arbitrary wage thresholds could have dire consequences for the entire agricultural workforce and only accelerate poverty in our rural communities.

Adding new labor costs is complicated and creates severe unintended consequences for all livestock workers – owners and employees alike.

First and foremost, implementing new labor costs or hourly caps isn't certain to put more money in workers' pockets. Instead, available hours may be reduced, and may change the way schedules are set. 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. By imposing new labor costs, many farms, ranches and dairies simply may not be able to continue providing these additional benefits to their workers. This will accelerate rural poverty, reduce income for employees and add additional burden to state safety net programs.

Livestock operations require special considerations

Livestock operations have unique needs and any policy or legal changes should continue to recognize the challenges for producers and the workforce. Cows, sheep and other livestock rely on 24-hour supervision and response, requiring a flexible workforce year-round. During calving or lambing seasons, immediate care, regardless of time of day is essential.

- Federal law already exempts those principally involved in "range work."
- Oregon law and regulations recognize overtime exemptions for professions calling for close flexibility and proximity to their work, including firefighters, elder care workers and seafood processors.
- Other states recognize these differences and many that have implemented new overtime pay requirements have accounted for the unique requirements to care for sheep, cows, and other livestock.

Producers can't afford more cost increases

Our producers don't set meat or milk prices, and are often at the mercy of larger processors. Costs for feed, fuel and supplies are skyrocketing. Labor costs come straight from the bottom line at a time when farm and ranch income is already too tight.

**PROTECT LIVESTOCK WORKERS. PROTECT OUR FARMS, RANCHES AND DAIRIES.
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