



**Stayton Sublimity Chamber of Commerce**  
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Dear House Business & Labor Committee,

*Stayton Sublimity Chamber of Commerce*, represents a swath of communities in Marion & Linn Counties including Stayton, Sublimity, Scio, Aumsville, Turner, Scio and the Santiam Canyon. Much of the region is supported by agriculture, from grass seed to small orchards, vineyards, small ranches and food crops. We want to again express our opposition in to requirements for overtime pay to agricultural employees, (currently HB 4002).

This bill essentially replaces HB 2358 from the last legislative session, with a few concessions, but does not take into account the many concerns for seasonality, commodity pricing, and impact to small farms, that other states have addressed when working through this issue.

Currently, agriculture is exempt from overtime pay under the federal FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT, due to the unique seasonal nature of agricultural production. Employees may work longer hours during peak season and may work less or none for the duration of the year.

HB 4002 shows a complete lack of understanding of the farming industry. Most farmers are already struggling with large amounts of money tied up in equipment, labor, and supplies. Some years farmers make money, others they lose money. It's not a lucrative business. For most it's simply a passion, a way of life.

- Agriculture has seasonality. It's dependent on weather windows and limited by the perishability of our produce. The job doesn't get done in a typical 9-5.
- Farms can't pass along added labor costs. Unlike most industries, farms' prices get set by the commodity market. Farmers can't raise the price just because costs go up.
- Other states' mandates led to capped hours and lower paychecks. Farms are forced to invest in mechanization and cap employees' hours to reduce labor costs.
- Farms will be forced to reduce benefits to offset labor cost increases. Most farms provide benefits beyond an hourly wage, but those incentives are not being considered.
- 95% of Oregon farms are family-owned businesses. Smaller farms are the least able to absorb added labor costs.

Added payroll costs will cost most farmers more than they can absorb, which will lead instead to limiting employees to 40 hours per week, actually taking much needed money away from those employees who need it, and potentially reduce overall production, creating a dependence on automation and other states for what ours will no longer be producing.



Please oppose HB 4022. This bill threatens to harm those it was intended to help.

Respectfully,

Carmelle Bielenberg, CEO, Stayton Sublimity Chamber of Commerce  
David Giglio, Chairman, Chamber GAC  
Israel Aguirre, Jennifer Tiger, Matt Spenner: Directors, Chamber GAC