

February 8, 2022

Chair Holvey, Vice Chairs Bonham and Grayber, and Members of the House Business and Labor Committee,

My name is Akash Singh and I am writing on behalf of the Union of Concerned Scientists, an organization dedicated to achieving climate policies through the advancement of scientific data and analyses. UCS is proud to be supported by more than 10,000 Oregonians, including over 500 professionals who are a part of our Science Network.

As an organization dedicated to the sound use of science in public policy, UCS believes that our lived environment includes sound labor policies. As such, I am writing to you today in support of HB 4002, a measure to require that farmworkers receive overtime pay after 40 hours in a workweek at one and one-half times the employee's regular rate of pay.

Farmworkers are an integral part of our society and deserve the same labor protections other workers enjoy. Farmworkers have been excluded from minimum wage protections, child labor laws, and overtime pay since the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938. Farmworkers are also some of the lowest paid workers in Oregon with a median income of \$28,000 a year, a shocking amount considering the long work weeks and the exponentially increasing cost of living.

Farm work can often be grueling and intensive in the best of times. In an era where climate catastrophes are making the environment more severe and unpredictable through extreme temperatures and wildfires alone, this critical work becomes even more hazardous.

Oregon's 86,389 farmworkers deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. I urge you to pass HB 4002 to ensure farmworkers in Oregon are paid fairly for their skilled and essential labor, and to amend the measure to eliminate the five-year phase in period.

Sincerely,

Akash Singh, JD  
Western States Policy Advocate  
Union of Concerned Scientists