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On Behalf Of: 350 Salem Oregon
Committee: House Committee On Business and Labor
Measure: HB4002

Testimony for the Business and Labor Committee Hearing Tuesday 2/8/2022
by 350 Salem Oregon

HB 4002 would extend overtime pay to Oregon's 86,389 farmworker over the years 2023 to 2027. Salem Oregon supports HB 4002 but would like it strengthened to begin earlier.

Farmworkers are some of the lowest paid workers in Oregon with a median income of \$28,000 a year. Farmworkers who put food on our table should make enough money to be able to put food on their own table.

The reasons for having overtime laws to protect workers generally apply more strongly to farmworkers. These laws, dating back to the 1930's, are needed to prevent the exploitation of workers due to imbalance in power between individual workers and their employers. If anything, farmworkers have less bargaining power than most other workers. Their working environment is much harsher than most other workers.

Climate change is worsening working conditions for farmworkers due to increased temperatures and worse air pollution from increased wildfires.

The background of excluding farm and domestic workers from protections comes from the 1930s when almost all these workers were Black. According to a Statesman Journal article published today, these workers were excluded "at the behest of white southern farmers." Although most farmworkers are now Latino, an element of racism still seems present in excluding them from the legal protection of overtime rules.

Please act now to end the injustice of farmworkers being denied the protection of overtime rules.

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350 Salem OR is the local affiliate of the international climate action organization 350.org. The mission of 350 Salem OR is to build an inclusive grassroots movement that targets keeping fossil fuels in the ground, advocates for a just transition to a renewable energy economy, and supports community-based resilience in response to the climate crisis. "350" refers to the safe level of carbon dioxide (ppm) in the air, a

level that the world passed in 1988. Today the level is 417 ppm, the highest level in the last 3 million years.