

Date: 2.9.2022

To: House Committee on Business and Labor

From: Rhianna Simes, M.S.Ed. of Verdant Phoenix Farm

Re: Support for Farmworker Overtime

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

My name is Rhianna Simes, and I live in Phoenix, OR and/or I am writing on behalf of myself and my farm, Verdant Phoenix Farm.

I am writing to you today in support of farmworker overtime. Farmworkers should receive overtime pay after 40 hours in a workweek at one and one-half times the employee's regular rate of pay.

I have worked as a farm worker for years before owning my own farm. I watched my hard working colleagues working long days, and weekends and barely be able to feed their families, pay rent, etc. As a farm worker, I felt undervalued and unappreciated because I was working more than full time and could hardly pay my own bills with the meager wages that were provided. It is time that agricultural jobs had the same rules as other sectors. When you work over time you should get paid as such. If people who throw luggage, or clean floors are eligible for over time, then so should highly skilled, professional farm workers!

My farm will be impacted by these changes; however, we know that when people are paid fairly there is less turnover, and more commitment. This saves money in the long run. We want to train our crews, keep them, and help them to feel like valued members of our team. We believe this is important and reflects our values of equity and inclusion.

I urge you to pass farmworker overtime in the 2022 Legislative Session to ensure farmworkers in Oregon are paid fairly for their skilled and essential labor.

Sincerely,

Rhianna Simes, M.S.Ed.

Owner, Farm Worker, Mother

Verdant Phoenix Farm

Phoenix, Oregon