

Submitter: Lisa Perry

Committee: House Committee On Business and Labor

Measure: HB4002

I think it would benefit others to understand how the ag industry works. That is a hard thing to fully comprehend when there are so many faucets in our state's ag lineup. I think it is great to have so many diverse operations that bring jobs and revenue to our state. One con to so much diversity is that it makes it hard to have a blanket approach when creating laws. When less than 1 % of the population farms, how could we ever expect the other 99% to understand the INCREDIBLY UNUSUAL economics in farming? With the way that HB4002 is crafted it shows our representatives DO NOT understand the ins and outs of the farming industry.

Let me provide an example of how I have no control over what I am paid for my efforts.

- 1) We will start from the backend because that is where we get paid...at the end of the line. 7-12 months after we bring our crop in from the fields, we may be given advances until the total compensation is paid to us.
- 2) The total amount we are compensated is what is left over after all the packing, storing, food safety fees, audit fees, boxes, stickers, line run time, and trucking has all been taken out.
- 3) Let me state that we have no idea if we will be paid .10/lb or .59/lb or worse yet...be sent a bill. Yes, people who produce food can be sent a bill after we have paid to raise and harvest this crop. This is a matter of how the global chain is working. Do people want red apples this year or did they decide they only want to eat yellow apples? Is there a transportation disturbance so fruit has sat too long to make it to the end market? That can and does happen! And it is for no reason that a grower has control of!!!!
- 4) During the course of the year, farmers pay to have the crops planted/tended to. They pay the fertilizer bill, the propane bill for frost protection, the ever increasing cost of diesel, and for many farmers, we pay the living expenses for families to live on the farm. It is insanity to not have that astronomical cost attributed to the employees compensation. I believe farmers have provided financial evaluations of what it costs to house 1 employee. Our representatives are choosing to turn their head that employers are investing in their employees.

It costs money every single step of the way to produce labor intensive crops...we pay this again not knowing what prices may come 7-12 months down the road.

- 5) The investments it requires to even be able to begin farming is enormous. To plant an acre of orchard is well over \$10,000. All of these mandatory investments seem to be overlooked by those who think farmers have all of this cash floating around the farm. It is these investments that provide jobs down the road.

Our representatives could take more time to better understand the employer's side of this equation.

Again I would like emphasis how wonderful it is to have a diverse range of crops grown in Oregon. We have talented residents who make the ag economy what it is! This may be hard for some to hear, but SOME PEOPLE ENJOY WORKING IN AG....employees and employers. After listening to last night's testimonies, one may make the assumption that a huge amount of employees loath working within the agriculture sector. This is so far from the truth. There are employees who feel valued and compensated fairly for their efforts in the line or work they pursued. Not every employee is living pay check to pay check like the advocates of this bill love to blast from the roof tops.

Farm owners and employees will both bear the burden of a poorly crafted, one-sided approach to addressing agriculture overtime. We must all be willing to compromise to create an Oregon solution that preserves employee jobs, recognizes Oregon's family farm economy, and treats employees and farmers fairly. Other states have identified workable solutions that recognize that a threshold of 40-hours for overtime with agricultural labor is not sustainable for anyone. We must work together to find a good solution.

PLEASE take the time to craft this bill in a way that has a workable solution.

I request you get a fully open, non-labor union stacked, fully bi-partisan, committee or working group together to create an actual workable solution for all parties involved. It may be difficult, but lets work hard to do it right the first time, instead of making major mistakes and paying for it later while we try to correct the newly created problems.

Thank you for your time and to help ensure that Oregon continues to farm.