

Submitter: Jason Hunton
On Behalf Of: Oppose HB 4002
Committee: House Committee On Business and Labor
Measure: HB4002

Hello, My name is Jason Hunton of Hunttons' Farm in Paul Holvey's district 8. We grow conventional and certified organic forage grass seed for animal consumption and grains that are milled into flour in Eugene and becomes breads and pastries. I oppose HB 4002 because it is a well-intentioned very bad idea that will ultimately destroy jobs in Oregon.

We hire seasonal workers each summer. Usually high school and college kids, sometimes ex felons restarting their life, sometimes it is a US Army or Navy veteran looking to integrate to civilian society. Sometimes it is a retired person looking for extra income. Late January of 2020, Just before the COVID lockdowns, Representative Paul Holvey came at my invitation to learn about our farm and by extension the other farms he is supposed to represent. In 2020 our crew average wage was \$16.73 per hour for 13 employees and for 5 of them, their very first job. Our payroll including benefits, payroll taxes, exceeds \$213K. HB 4002 will increase that by over \$35,460. That coupled with current fuel and input costs, presents an existential threat to many farms, especially smaller ones. Large farms will move to more autonomous self driving tractors as are now becoming available.

In 2009 and again in 2020, Tourism, construction, manufacturing all were failing the state of Oregon. Agriculture was the resilient backbone of the region. Now HB 4002's unintended consequences will be to consolidate small family farms to large ones that do not offer the same numbers of employment. This chamber has a short memory and at times seems outright antagonistic to what is a quiet steady source of employment for the state during times of crisis. HB 4002 will help large scale farms take over small family farms and will not retain the same number of workers. Please do not vote for this bill.

Sincerely,

Jason Hunton