

Submitter: Herb Annala

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Business and Labor

Measure: HB4002

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to you today in opposition of HB 4002. I am a fourth generation pear farmer in Hood River County. I consider myself part of a group of people who knowingly choose a career path that is a constant uphill battle. Pears are not glamorous to farm, people do not choose to do this for fame or fortune. It is a commodity that returns to growers has remained flat over the last decade or longer. We cannot set our prices, the market heavily dictates pricing. We cannot control our inputs, we have to pay what they tell us to pay for supplies. Bugs do not care if we have a year with low income which can drive our inputs up drastically. The trees do not care if we have a bad year, they continue to grow and need labor intensive care or we risk not having a quality crop in years to come. We have to keep up on equipment or before you know it more things need to be replaced at once than a farmer can afford. Equipment and technology only continue to be more expensive. I held off on buying a new sprayer and replacing the almost 30 year old sprayer for one more year to get all I could out of it, the result was an unexpected twenty percent increase from the prior year, a cost I had no choice but to hand over the extra \$5000. To decide to continue farming seems foolish someday, or sometimes for years at a time. Yet with increasing costs coming at us from every direction, someone sitting behind a desk thinks up more legislation that only adds more burden to an already difficult profession to make a decent living. We are already choking on increased rules and regulations from any and all government agencies that decide they need "to make a difference" in the world but don't have a clue what it already takes to bring food to market. I am relatively young for a farmer, I am 35 years old with a wife and two young children. I am just young enough that I wonder if I really should be doing this for a living or do I still have time to completely change my life.

The farming community in Oregon relies heavily on hand labor, we have no choice, there is not any technology at our disposal to reduce labor in the orchards. It simply does not exist yet. We have learned from decades of doing what we do that keeping workers happy is key to having a successful operation. Part of keeping workers happy is providing housing and already paying decent wages. We truly care about our workers and already do what we can to be fair as employers. If this legislation passes there will be many of us that try to do everything we can to make due, there will for sure be people that are pushed over the edge and will have no choice but to sell their family farm or worse, lose it trying. Most of us will have to try to do work arounds by limiting hours for any individual worker and telling him/her they will need to find after hours employment at neighboring farms or non farming jobs, risking

losing long time employees to other operations. This does not help the worker, it only creates more difficulty for them in supporting their families. Who ever wrote this bill doesn't seem to have anyone's best interest in mind. Not the farmer, not the worker, certainly not the families of either. We will work longer hours ourselves, workers will be less efficient and potentially make less money and spend less time with their families. The only people this bill helps is the egos of the writers as they pat themselves on the backs for getting something passed, no matter what the unintended consequences happen to be. Legislation like this is self serving garbage that makes the world no better of a place to live.

Herb Annala

Proud Pear Farmer in Hood River County