



To: House Committee on Business and Labor

From: Denise Lopez, Conservation Organizer, Friends of the Columbia Gorge

Re: Support for HB 4002 - Farmworker Overtime

Date: February 9, 2022

Chair Holvey, Vice Chairs Bonham and Grayber, and Members of the House Business and Labor Committee, Friends of the Columbia Gorge thanks you for the opportunity to provide support for HB 4002.

Friends works to protect, preserve, and steward the Columbia Gorge for future generations. Ensuring the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act and other laws protecting Gorge resources are actively enforced is at the core of what we do. The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act requires protection of the Gorge including protections for agricultural and forest uses. This law is incorporated by reference in ORS 196.150, the Columbia River Gorge Compact. Traditionally, we've worked to strengthen state laws to protect the Gorge's scenic resources and now we are fighting to defend the communities that live there. Farmworkers in the Gorge and throughout Oregon deserve the same dignity, respect, and labor rights as others.

Ensuring that farmworkers have a safe working environment is critical to protecting the agricultural economy of the Gorge. Passage of HB 4002 will help ensure that agricultural workers have a safe, healthy working environment and enjoy the same rights as employees in other industries. Farmworkers are the backbone of the state, with long work weeks and tough conditions. They should receive the same consideration as employees in other sectors. This includes receiving overtime pay after 40 hours in a workweek at one and one-half times the employee's regular rate of pay.

This is especially important due to the effects of climate change. With rising temperatures, more frequent extreme weather events, and the hazards of wildfire smoke, agricultural workers need more protections. This cannot wait another year, considering the long transition period. We're grateful for all the work and leadership from communities and our representatives.

Friends of the Columbia Gorge urges you to pass the farmworker overtime bill in the 2022 Legislative Session to ensure farmworkers in Oregon are paid fairly for their skilled and essential labor.