

To all State Representatives,

I find myself a family farmer writing to you again for the 4th time asking you to vote NO on HB 4002A.

I cannot stress enough how willing and wanting the majority of agriculture is to address any perceived issues with how our employees are treated, but it means that the people in the legislature have to be willing to break party lines, come sit down with growers and work out solutions. The passing of HB 4002A will lead to the unintended consequence of small farms/businesses disappearing even faster on the state and national level. I ask our Representatives to vote NO on HB 4002A and to please take the time to redraft and pass a bill that empowers the agricultural industry of Oregon to continue building multi generation relationships with its employees, and communities. This process has been rushed for the sake of what can only appear to be feel good politics and political gains before a midterm election.

The consequences of HB4002A ranges from:

- Capping of employee hours to 40 hours a week, meaning a decrease in earning potential for the employees
- The potential that farmers could no longer afford to provide housing to no cost to their employees and families
- Potential displacement of those families due to increases in living cost and decreased wages
- An increased reliance on H2A employees and/or labor contractors
- The financial and regulatory burdens and the potential of this bill forcing farms/businesses to either rely on government subsidies to stay in tack and/or being forced out of business
- The decrease in numbers of small family farms/businesses state wide
- The consolidation of farm land into larger single entity owned businesses, which would lead to a larger disconnect between farmers and their employees, and communities where the farmland is located

In short, the negative consequences and the burden this bill places on farms and their employees far out way any positive outcome.

For many months farmers have been writing to its representatives trying to get this legislature to understand how detrimental this bill would be for Oregon Ag, only for our efforts to be flat out ignored, and be treated as if we don't understand our own industry, all while various politicians ensure farmers that the agricultural industry is valued and that they care about the small businesses in our state, then turning around and vilifying our industry and the people in it.

On my own small family pear orchard I currently house six families rent free. Four of these families are second generation living on the Orchard and working on the farm. I and my family have done our best to not just provide above OSHA standards living conditions but assist these families in becoming integral parts of our community. With the passing of HB4002A I would no longer be able to provide the family housing I do today. I will have to cut back the hours of many employees whom I consider to be an extension of my own family, bonus' will become less available, I will have to automate the jobs that I can, and I will be forced to rely on the H2A program to ensure I have a workforce large enough to complete jobs, essentially creating less work and taking jobs from our long time established year round employees. All of this will eventually lead to employees leaving for larger farms, or moving out of our

local and possibly state communities to our own detriment and creating a larger need and reliance on either automation or the H2A program. I will be forced to change the infrastructure of my employee housing to accommodate a more seasonal less local workforce.

I will be forced to do all of this in efforts to keep the Orchard in business, however all of these changes require large amounts of capital, and overhead, and there is no guarantee I will be able to keep the business operational. The Pear market is a price takers market, I have no control over what my crop will sell for and on already razor thin margins the reality is HB 4002A pushes me closer to having to shut down.

All of the mentioned options whether that be the changes in how we operate, or the potential of going out of business will become a reality not just for me but for a majority of owners in the agricultural landscape. I mentioned before HB 4002A would have unintended consequences, however at this point the legislator is well aware of the consequences, and for myself and many other farmers this seems like a deliberate attack on small farms and their employees. It seems as if the State of Oregon would prefer agriculture to be consolidated into a handful of growers and producers with less attachments to employees and the communities surrounding them. HB 4002A forces farmers into making decisions that are to the detriment of our employees, or to go out of business. I question why anyone in our legislature would be ok with passing a bill with such disastrous consequences?

Let's make it clear, a vote in favor of HB 4002A would show how disconnected the Oregon Legislature is from not just ag but small businesses within this state, confirm that our representatives don't care about the industries' input, show how little they think of farmers, and communicate clearly that as long as they get a perceived political win they don't care how it will affect everyone from farm worker to farm owner. Please vote NO on HB4002A - this is not the right bill to help agricultural employees.

Please take the time to work with the agricultural industry and show that you are willing to truly take the time to understand the inputs and issues our industry faces, and give us the chance to help correct any perceived issues with how agricultural employees are treated.

I am an ethical business owner and person not because the State has instructed me to be one, I am an ethical business owner and person DESPITE the State making it harder to be one.

“Nothing is easier than to have good intentions but without an understanding of how an economy works, good intentions can lead to disastrous consequences for a whole nation.”

Dr. Thomas Sowell

Thank you

Andrew Halliday