

Submitter: Herbie Annala
On Behalf Of: Oppose HB 4002
Committee: Joint Committee On Farm Worker Overtime
Measure: HB4002

To whom it may concern,
Although exhausted from trying to run our farming operation and keep to up to date on rules and regulations that make my job harder and more time consuming, I am writing today urging you to oppose HB 4002A.

It is very hard these days to not feel overwhelmed and hopeless about the future of small farms in our state or country for that matter. I have been farming for 15 years on the same property that my family has farmed since the early 1900's. In that time we have had more regulation crammed down our throats than ever before. My whole career as been absorbing costs to implement new rules or regulations on top of having to have already higher costs just to retain employees. We don't have the ability to pass on the higher operating costs to customers, we grow pears, it is already difficult to sell our product for a high enough price to cover costs and maintain a healthy farming operation. Tax credits in exchange for having to pay overtime doesn't help if we don't have any taxable income on any given year. That just comes out of our pockets. I am more than willing to help make an employees life better but I do not agree that this legislation will accomplish that goal. I will be forced to cut back on hours which will not make my crew happy, it will only force them to find a second job at neighboring farms to make ends meet for their families, costing them more time and headache. There are times of the year it won't be possible to cut back hours. There also are no people available to add to the work force to make up for lost hours. Our industry has no way of mechanizing hand labor jobs, the technology simple does not exist. The only thing this legislation does is put a feather in the cap of the people that sit behind a desk thinking they are making a difference in the world then not caring about the unintended consequences.

I apologize if this letter is not concise or consistent but I have a real job to get back to, too many tasks demanding my time, food to grow for other people who don't think farmers are important to the world. I would love to give my employees all the money in the world but the reality is unless the public is willing the buy more pears at decent prices I will likely be rethinking my life choices in the coming years before I am too old of a dog to learn a new trick.

Thank you for your time, I know it is the most valuable thing we have in life.