

Submitter: Jeanne Reeves
On Behalf Of: Oppose HB 4002
Committee: Joint Committee On Farm Worker Overtime
Measure: HB4002

Our family orchard is at risk of closing if HB 4002A passes and we are required to pay overtime for all hours worked above 40 hours per week. We treat our employees well. We pay for their housing (year round and seasonal), we provide year round workers with vehicles and we pay all employees a year end bonus. Despite rising costs of labor and all materials, we are not able to increase the price we receive for our fruit. Our fruit is sold in a global market and prices are dictated to us by supply/demand. Some years, we are already losing money. Any added costs are absorbed by our family's farm.

We are also concerned about the negative impact this bill would have on farm employees. Employees will see their hours reduced if overtime pay is required for work more than 40-hours per week. Additionally, our farm would no longer be financially capable to pay for all of our workers housing/expenses, vehicles and bonuses. This would be detrimental to the workers.

A tax credit is a short term band-aid. Our farm is labor intensive, especially during the spring and harvest season. No mechanization or other cost reducing systems exist. If we can no longer afford (or find) labor - our business will no longer be viable.

Perhaps allowing a 16-20 week exception for harvest periods with a cap of 55 hours per week would be a more manageable solution. This would benefit both farms and workers. Workers get the extra hours when work is available and farms get the crop harvested.

Our farm is third generation. Despite the many obstacles we face every year, our family loves what we do. We love the land we take care of and the people with work with. This bill has the potential to end all of this for us. I urge you to oppose an overtime mandate at 40-hours in HB 4002A. Please VOTE NO ON HB 4002A!