

Submitter: Jim Schlechter

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Farm Worker Overtime

Measure: HB4002

As I have written before regarding this proposal, I feel I must stress again the harmful effect this overtime rule will have on farms. We already have a starting wage that is more than \$4.00 per hour above minimum wage, and several of our long-time employees earn over \$6.00 per hour above minimum wage. Our labor expenses in 2021 were much higher than anticipated, and if we have to pay overtime, especially during the harvest months, we will simply be forced to stop growing certain labor-intensive crops in the future. We will also have to limit our workers to 40-hour per week shifts, so in the long term, they will actually earn less than they do now.

The proposed tax credit will not help farmers. Our labor expenses, our seed expenses, our fertilizer expenses, etc. provide us with plenty of expenses to offset our income, especially since the grocery stores and produce houses that we sell our crops to are the ones who set our prices. We are price-takers and are forced to accept whatever the market price is, or else plow under our unsold crops.

Please reconsider this matter and revisit better ways to help Oregon farmers and farm workers.