

Date: 02/09/2022

To: House Committee on Business & Labor

From: Macy Goehring – Santucci Ranch & Turf

RE: Oppose HB 4002

My name is Macy Goehring, I am an employee at Santucci Ranch & Turf in Prineville, Oregon. I am writing regarding the HB 4002 and to express my sincere opposition to agriculture overtime. After watching the session meeting held on 02/08/2022 at 5:30 pm, I have a few issues that I would like to comment on.

To start off with, Representative Salinas made the comment that housing is not a part of the ranch employees pay. When an employer offers housing, it is free, and must be thought of as a benefit. When you do the calculation of the employees' paycheck plus their rent it comes out to the same dollar amount per hour they would be making without the free housing. If the employee did not have the free housing than they would be having to pay a mortgage or rent somewhere else. Most employers offer the employees who do not have free housing more per hour to balance it out and ensure that every employee is getting paid equally.

Majority of the testimonies that were in support of HB 4002 chose to utilize race as their big argument for support. While there is a high number of Hispanic farm and ranch employees there is also a high number of White farm and ranch employees like me. In this industry you get paid based off your skill, not your race. The more you are trained to do the more you will get paid per hour, or many get paid by salary. Benefits are also determined by what the place of employment can offer to each of their employees. In fact, one of my Hispanic co-workers could potentially be considered a supervisor and receives a higher pay than me.

There was an individual who is in support of this bill that owns and operates a nursery in the valley. This individual can offer paid maternity leave, paid vacation, overtime, etc. These are easy to offer to your employees when the business needs very few employees because the work is not as extensive, time consuming, and the total operating costs are much lower than the bigger farm and ranch operations.

When operating a farm or ranch, you must have certain equipment to get the job done, and it is not cheap, you also must include maintenance cost as well as repair costs. You must have employees that are trained to operate these machines, and enough of these machines and employees to get the job done efficiently. To ensure the crops are to their best quality fertilizer is needed, and it is not cheap considering the price of fertilizer went up 200% in the last year. To ensure that the livestock stay healthy; vaccines, wormer, and other medication is needed; these can sometimes be costly especially when you have a high number of cattle. As well as the other expenses that nobody notices, or cares to investigate when making decisions like HB 4002.

Agriculture is a very diverse industry, there are many different businesses that fall into this industry. This bill is trying to put the agriculture industry into a one size fits all 40-hour limit, and I will tell you that for most agriculture jobs that is nearly impossible. The agriculture industry cannot be put into a one size fits all. For a nursery or an orchard that may be possible because they are very different operations. When livestock and farming and harvesting is

determined by weather it is just not sensible or possible. One week we could be having to work from 6:00am to 11:00 pm to get our hay baled and put up in the sheds before the big rainstorm comes the following day. If the hay is baled and not put up before it gets rained on it gets ruined and turns into what we call feeder hay and must be sold for a decreased price. In the winter months we cannot tell a cow exactly when she needs to calve, that is not something we can control, we could work our full days of work and then must spend half of our night pulling calves and ensure that they all live. The agriculture industry is a unique industry and one that is controlled by factors that no human has any control over. It is not a 9-5 job where we have a schedule and work set hours. In this industry we know what needs to be done, but you must consider the weather, water, livestock, etc., meaning our daily plans get changed all the time due to the factors above. Farms and ranches are different sizes, different crops are grown everywhere; some needing more work than others; livestock breeds & needs, etc.

It is simple for other industries to operate on a 40-hour work week because the number of qualified employees for say a job in retail is a lot higher than the number of qualified employees in the agriculture industry.

The agriculture community is a family, and the employees are very well taken care of. We are not forced to work, we can take time off if we are sick, we work hard because the agriculture employees are some of the last that have a good work ethic. We want to work long hours during the busy times of the year so in the slower months we can support ourselves and be able to take vacations.

This lifestyle is not cheap, finding good labor is rare these days, and making agriculture overtime is just an unnecessary cost to add. Enforcing overtime will only cause my hours as well as the many other employees, farmers, and ranchers in the agriculture industry to have a cap on our hours of 40 or less hours per week. Not only would this effect my overall income for our busy months, and the year, but also will affect the support I can give to myself throughout the slower months. It could also cause my coworkers as well as myself to have to look for a second job to supplement our income or must leave our jobs at the ranch to find a new full-time job to support ourselves and our families.

We do not get to determine the prices that we sell our products for. These prices are determined by the markets especially the international market.

This entire idea is stemming from California, and we are not California, nor do we want to become California. This did not work well for those in California, because more and more of the agriculture employees are moving up here to get away from the agriculture overtime in California. Employers are capping the employee's hours at 40-hours a week and hiring more employees to work the rest of the week, so rather than making more money out of this deal the agriculture employees are starting to realize that this backfired on them, and they are now making less money than before.

All I am asking is that it is understood that passing this bill will only hurt the agriculture industry and its employees. I strongly encourage you to think about everything in your life that is brought

to you from the agriculture community and how this bill will affect that. Please do the right thing and protect the agriculture industry from HB 4002 and the negative affects it will bring.