

Submitter: Daniel Jepsen

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment

Measure: HB3158

I am writing today to oppose HB3158. I am a 38 year old wheat farmer with 4 children, ages 8 to 1. I have worked in agriculture my entire life, work which includes research as a graduate student at Oregon State University while achieving my M.S. Later I worked for an Oregon potato farm, and then for an Oregon onion farm before returning to the family wheat farm after my father retired. I have been farming for myself and operating the family business going on 4 years. This bill hits right at the heart of nearly every agricultural operation in this state, including my own. Of the budget I have for repairs on maintenance on my farming equipment, tires are a principal item. Agricultural products, including wheat, get moved to market on trucks, which have a lot of tires. Farm equipment moves on tires. Just about everything in the field has a tire on it, whether large or small. I have already seen the price of tires rise dramatically this last year. Adding a tax only adds insult to injury. I have no way to recoup the additional costs that will be added should this bill become law.

Regarding diesel, I am now paying more for diesel than anytime in my life or during my father's career. I am proud to say that our fuel consumption is also lower on a per/acre basis than before as a result of improved farming practices. However, there is little room for improvement at this point. One bright point in our budget has always been that at least off-road diesel for our tractors and combine was cheaper because it did not have taxes added to that. Now that cushion in my budget appears to be at risk. I don't often rent heavy equipment, but my previous employers frequently did. Often owning the rental equipment was prohibitively expensive or impractical since it was needed only seasonally. Those farmers will face a lot of extra cost and have nothing to show for it. I'll reiterate that most farmers such as myself have NO WAY to recoup the costs this bill would incur. Moreover, there is absolutely no benefit to my family or community. If the money were going to fix up roads badly in need of repair in my county, this might be somewhat more palatable. Rather, this bill seems to be another example of legislation that takes aim at rural businesses and family operations like mine in order to funnel money for solving urban problems.

Recently, a group of OSU and federal researchers visited my farm to discuss the challenges currently facing farmers. We dialogued on a number of matters. During the conversation, I told them that though it wasn't a matter of research, but legislative bills such as this one are probably the biggest threat to farming in Oregon. I think a few of the researchers were surprised at this, but its a fact.

A version of this bill was already thrown out last year. Consider that. Please throw it out again...for good.

Sincerely,  
Daniel Jepsen