



TO: Senate Committee on Labor and Business
FR: Ira Cuello-Martinez, PCUN
RE: Support for SB 907-6

March 30, 2023

Chair Taylor, Vice Chair Bonham, and Members of the Senate Labor and Business Committee,

My name is Ira Cuello-Martinez and I am the policy and advocacy director at PCUN, Oregon's Farmworker Union. At PCUN, we work to empower farmworkers and working Latinx families to improve their working conditions through community building, organizing, and policy advocacy.

I am testifying in support of SB 907-6, the right to refuse hazardous work. We have been the primary coordinators of a vast network of labor, environmental, and worker advocates who support this bill.

About two weeks ago, this committee had a public hearing on SB 907 to highlight the issues we have identified with Oregon's current rule governing this right to refuse. We heard testimony from Hector, a farmworker in Marion County, who was asked and expected to work in unsafe conditions that could have led to getting seriously injured or even death. When Hector spoke up about the dangerous conditions to his employer, he was fired from his job. This is not okay.

We also learned how the current state rule is very complicated, unclear, and technical to understand. This is a major concern for workers who have to interpret how this right is intended to function. Lastly, we heard concerns from employer representatives about increased liability due to the ambiguous language of the base bill.

Since then, and in response to these concerns, advocates conferenced with employer representatives, Senator Patterson, Senator Taylor, OR OSHA, and BOLI, and worked diligently and in good faith to find a compromise that all sides could agree to. The end result of this thorough process is the -6 amendment before you. It explicitly puts into statute that it is discrimination to interfere with a worker's right to reasonably refuse work when exposed to dangerous conditions that could lead to serious injury or death without facing retaliation. The

amendment also directs OR OSHA to enter rulemaking and adopt rules in accordance with federal OSHA. As a result, all stakeholders are now in agreement.

Workers deserve a safe work environment and they should feel empowered to stand up for their rights when their health and life are at risk. We appreciate everyone's efforts on this important policy and we urge you to vote in favor of SB 907-6.

Ira Cuello-Martinez
Policy and Advocacy Director
PCUN