



February 5, 2025

Chair Grayber, Vice-Chairs Elmer and Muñoz, and Members of the House Committee on Labor and Workplace Standards,

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

On behalf of our members, I am writing in support of HB 2125 to provide Emergency Unemployment Benefits during Climate Events.

Farmworkers are particularly impacted by extreme weather conditions given their work is outdoors and harvest season happens over the summer and early fall. In recent years, Oregon has seen an increase in wildfires, wildfire smoke, and extreme heat. Unfortunately, we had a farmworker and immigrant from Guatemala, Sebastian Francisco Perez, die near St. Paul during a record-breaking heatwave in 2021 where temperatures reached as high as 118 degrees Fahrenheit.

One of our members shared the following:

“We have to find a way to protect ourselves from the heat and the sun. When we take breaks to rest we go to the shade of the trees that are on the edge of the field, but sometimes there are no trees and we have to rest in the sun without any other shade. I have had to see colleagues feeling bad, some with headaches, dizziness or vomit working under excessive heat. We have no choice but to work.”

We believe this bill will help alleviate pressure on eligible workers by not forcing them to work in extreme weather conditions because they will not have to worry about losing income or wages.

PCUN urges you to vote yes on HB 2125 to extend unemployment benefits to workers impacted by climate events.

Thank you,

Ira Cuello-Martinez
Policy Advocacy Director
PCUN