

Submitter: Devon Wells  
On Behalf Of: Hood River County Farm Bureau  
Committee: Senate Committee On Labor and Business  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB622

Chair Taylor, Vice-Chair Bonham, and Members of the Committee - thank you for the opportunity to voice my support of SB 622.

This bill would exempt employers of H-2A workers from paying State Unemployment Tax on behalf of their H-2A workers who do not qualify for the benefit. There is no reason that employers should be required to pay unemployment tax for employees that do not qualify for the benefit, much less will ever utilize the benefit.

The IRS exempts guest workers from FUTA, as does the State of Washington. Oregon agriculture is already at a disadvantage in the agriculture industry as compared to Washington and the United States in general. We do not need any other unnecessary burdens placed on our agriculture community.

Hood River agriculture is comprised of very labor-intensive crops in Pears, Cherries, and Apples - all pruned, thinned, and harvested by hand. Many of the amazing employees we hire are H2A workers. SB 622 equalizes the playing field for Oregon agricultural employers. I know that agricultural employers are struggling under Oregon's immense regulatory burden, and this bill is meant to alleviate a small portion of that burden for H-2A employers.

Please join me in supporting SB 622.

Sincerely,

Devon Wells  
President, Hood River County Farm Bureau  
5th Generation Pear, Cherry, and Apple Orchardist