



Associated Oregon Loggers, Inc.

PO Box 12339 | Salem, Oregon 97309 | (503) 364-1330 | aol@oregonloggers.org

February 10, 2025

The Honorable Dacia Grayber, Chair
House Committee On Labor and Workplace Standards
Oregon State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

Subject: HB 2957 - **Oppose**

Chair Grayber, Vice Chairs Elmer and Muñoz, and Members of the Committee:

For the record, my name is Amanda Sullivan-Astor, Forest Policy Manager at Associated Oregon Loggers and a certified forester. I am submitting this testimony in opposition of HB 2957, which significantly increases legal uncertainty, administrative burdens, and potential financial liabilities for small businesses that are already operating under tight margins.

HB 2957 eliminates the Bureau of Labor and Industries' (BOLI) current 90-day notice to sue, a critical provision that provides a defined timeframe for businesses to prepare legal defenses and manage potential liabilities. Without this timeframe, employers would face indefinite uncertainty, as claims could surface years after an alleged incident, when key evidence may be lost, and witnesses' memories have faded.

Coupled with the five-year statute of limitations for employment-related claims, the removal of the 90-day notice creates an environment where forest operators must maintain exhaustive records and legal readiness indefinitely. This is a significant burden for small businesses without dedicated HR departments or legal teams. The financial and emotional toll of prolonged potential litigation jeopardizes business stability and could lead to unnecessary settlements out of fear rather than merit.

Unintended consequences of HB 2957 include:

- **Increased legal costs:** Defending stale claims can cost small businesses upwards of \$75,000 even before reaching trial, threatening business viability.
- **Operational uncertainty:** Prolonged exposure to potential lawsuits hinders long-term planning and investment, critical for sustainable forestry operations.
- **Administrative overload:** Small, family-run businesses would need to adopt complex legal record-keeping practices beyond their current capacities.

We urge the Committee to reject HB 2957 to protect Oregon's small forest businesses from undue legal and financial strain. Maintaining the 90-day notice aligns with fair legal standards and supports the sustainability of family-owned enterprises in Oregon's forest sector.

Sincerely,

Amanda Sullivan-Astor, CF

Forest Policy Manager; Associated Oregon Loggers

Office: 503-364-1330

aastor@oregonloggers.org

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