

Submitter: Katie Baltzor  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Labor and Workplace Standards  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3142

I am in support of HB 3142 and companion bill SB622. This would allow employers non-citizen workers with a H-2A work visa to be exempt from paying unemployment tax. These workers are not eligible to receive unemployment insurance, so it makes no sense for an employer to have to contribute to this fund. The H-2A temporary agricultural program allows agricultural employers that are not able to fulfill their need for workers, to bring in nonimmigrant foreign workers into the US to perform seasonal or temporary labor. The employer must pay the Adverse Effect Wage Rate (\$19.82/hr in Oregon) and are responsible for housing and transportation costs. The cost of operating a farm or ranch in Oregon has increased significantly over the past years. Farmers and ranchers struggle with natural disasters (drought & wildfires), unpredictable markets, low yields and increased costs in fuel and other necessary supplies. While I personally have not worked with the H-2A program, I have had subcontractors performing conservation enhancements that depend on this much needed labor. Please exempt the H-2A and H-2B (non-agricultural program) from unemployment tax.