



## Service Employees International Union – Oregon State Council

February 18, 2025

Chair Taylor, Vice-Chair Bonham, Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in **opposition to SB 622, which would exempt employers who hire agricultural workers through the federal H-2A program from contributing to the unemployment insurance (UI) fund.**

My name is Alberto Gallegos and I am providing written testimony on behalf of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), Oregon. SEIU Oregon is composed of two locals: SEIU Local 503, representing homecare workers, nonprofit employees, in-home childcare providers, nursing home workers, and public sector employees; and SEIU Local 49, representing janitors, property service workers, light manufacturing employees, and healthcare workers. Together, we represent over 85,000 working people.

We strongly oppose SB 622 because it threatens worker protections and unfairly disadvantages local agricultural workers.

The H-2A program is meant to fill labor shortages with employers demonstrating that they have tried to recruit local workers first, but enforcement of this is weak, allowing some employers to prioritize H-2A workers over local workers. This undermines wages and job opportunities for Oregonians. Additionally, H-2A workers are entirely dependent on their employers for wages, housing, and employment conditions—leaving them vulnerable to exploitation with little recourse.

This bill also creates an unfair playing field. Employers hiring local workers would continue paying into the unemployment system, while those using H-2A labor would be exempt. This disparity would further harm Oregon's farming economy by incentivizing reliance on temporary labor rather than investing in a stable, local workforce.

Oregon's agriculture is unique, producing over 200 different crops. Yet federal programs often fail to address our unique needs. Instead of SB 622, we should invest in workforce training, fair labor practices, and community-based solutions like housing and education.

SEIU Oregon urges you to **vote No on SB 622** and instead support policies that truly strengthen Oregon's agricultural industry.

Thank you,

Alberto Gallegos  
Political and Government Relations Organizer  
SEIU Oregon State Council