



**Date: February 20th, 2025**

**To: Senate Committee on Early Childhood and Behavioral Health**

**RE: Please support SB 779**

Chair Reynolds, Vice-Chair Anderson, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Oregon Wine Council, whose members represent over fifty percent of Oregon wine grapes grown, produced, and sold, we encourage you to support SB 779, which would renew funding for the AgriStress Helpline in Oregon that is currently in operation to support the mental health of agriculture workers in crisis.

In the United States, suicide rates among farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural managers are nearly 58% higher than in any other occupation. Some contributing factors to these preventable deaths include financial losses, chronic illness, work-life imbalance, societal stigmas, and physical and social barriers to accessing mental health services.

The AgriStress Helpline, which was implemented and funded by the legislature in 2023, is a free and confidential crisis/support line that is available 24/7 with interpretation services provided in 160 languages. AgriStress Helpline specialists have unique training to understand the culture, values, stressors, and lived experiences of agriculture workers, in addition to a state-specific curated database of agricultural and health resources.

In the nearly two years since its implementation, this program has helped stop preventable deaths of our local agriculture workers. We urge you to support SB 779 to continue to fund this critical program for those working in Oregon's agriculture industry.

Sincerely,

**Fawn Barrie**  
**Executive Director**  
**Oregon Wine Council**