

Submitter: Alicia Hudson
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3194

Chair and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 3194. As a farm and timberland owner in rural Washington county, I write in strong opposition to this bill, as it seeks to impose penalties on landowners for farm camps operating on their property, even when those landowners may have no knowledge of such camps. The bill as written only limits penalties to landowners who has both delegated authority over a farm camp AND can prove no knowledge of the camp operator's failure to comply with existing regulations. This means landowners with no knowledge of any camp remain liable, even if they camp is not sanctioned by the landowner.

While I fully understand the importance of regulating farm camps to ensure the safety and well-being of workers and residents, HB 3194 creates an unfair burden on property owners who are not directly involved in the operation of these camps. In many cases, landowners may lease their properties to third parties for farming or other agricultural purposes and may not have direct oversight of how the land is used on a day-to-day basis. Penalizing landowners for activities that they were not aware of, or for which they had no involvement, is both unjust and counterproductive.

This bill places an undue responsibility on landowners to monitor every aspect of how their property is used, potentially leading to unnecessary financial and legal consequences for individuals who may not have any knowledge of, or control over, the presence of a farm camp on their land. Many landowners are small farmers or agricultural workers themselves, and imposing penalties on them for something outside their control could have devastating financial consequences. This creates an environment of fear and uncertainty rather than fostering cooperation and compliance.

Rather than penalizing landowners, I encourage the committee to explore more effective ways to regulate farm camps that focus on directly addressing the actions of those operating the camps. This could include increased oversight or enforcement of farm camp operators themselves, as they are the parties best positioned to ensure compliance with regulations. A more targeted approach would hold the responsible parties accountable without unjustly burdening landowners who may have no knowledge of the issue.

Furthermore, it is essential to remember that many rural landowners are already grappling with significant challenges related to land management, zoning regulations,

and financial sustainability. Adding more penalties to their responsibilities only adds to the stress and complexity they face in maintaining their properties and livelihoods.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to reconsider the provisions of HB 3194 that would penalize landowners for farm camps they may have no knowledge of. Instead, I encourage a more targeted and reasonable approach that ensures accountability while protecting landowners from undue harm.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Alicia Hudson