



## **Agricultural Coalition Urges “NO” on HB 3194**

House Bill 3194 imposes liability for renting farmland in Oregon without a connection to illegal marijuana operations.

### **☑ Fact – Leasing farmland is common practice, not negligence.**

Renting farmland is a well-established practice in Oregon with 29% of farmland leased, compared to the national average of 39%. This is especially critical for new or beginning farmers who lack the capital to purchase land. Leasing farmland helps keep land in production, providing income for aging producers. Many older farmers are retiring, and leasing is an important transition strategy to maintain the farm for subsequent generations.

### **☑ Fact – Lease agreements look different for every farm.**

Approximately 96% of Oregon’s farms and ranches are family owned. Not every operation has the financial means to engage an attorney to draft a lease agreement for their property. While it is best practice for farms to work with counsel and formalize the rental agreement in a written contract, some lease agreements are as simple as a handshake. Lessees may pay in a variety of ways.

### **☑ Fact – Honest landowners could face significant liability.**

HB 3194 creates considerable legal risk for landowners who lease their land. It makes them “jointly and severally” liable for violations of laws governing farmworker camps by lessees or squatters, even if they have no control or involvement. The bill wrongly holds landowners liable for any failure to comply with the Camp Operator Registration Act (CORA), even in situations outside of the scope of registered farmworker camps. The “defense” offered by HB 3194 is difficult, if not impossible, to prove. Any claims arising would require a landowner to hire an attorney, incurring significant expense before even reaching court.

Landowners cannot be expected to have eyes on their property 24/7, yet that is what the bill requires to avoid liability. Round-the-clock management is not the expectation for residential tenancy and should not be for farmland.

### **☑ Fact – Leasing farmland and renting housing to workers would be risky under HB 3194.**

HB 3194’s scope is unclear, potentially making all housing provided to workers subject to enforcement, even if it is not a farmworker camp. This is particularly problematic as many farms offer affordable housing to workers and their families, which could now be deemed non-compliant under HB 3194 and subject to claims under CORA. This creates further confusion and legal uncertainty for landowners.

HB 3194 does not achieve the proponents’ goal of preventing cartels from establishing operations in Oregon. Instead, it risks reducing the availability of leased farmland and workforce housing, which are vital to the state’s agricultural economy.