



House Committee on Judiciary

February 27, 2025

WAFLA Opposes House Bill 3194

The Worker and Farmer Labor Association (WAFLA) is a nonprofit membership association comprised of nearly 800 agricultural and seasonal employers. We offer ways for our members to access several federal visa programs, most notably the H-2A agricultural guest worker program, and receive assistance complying with state and federal labor standards. We also assist farmers with their workers' housing needs and offer human resource training and advice.

While we support using appropriate measures to stop illegal activity by cartels, we oppose House Bill 3194.

The current language of HB 3149 is overly broad, casting a wide net and possibly resulting in enormous liabilities for landowners. Instead, a more narrowly tailored approach to the issue is warranted.

Leasing farmland is a common practice in Oregon, and farmers in labor-intensive agriculture may lease housing for their workers. HB 3194 modifies the Camp Operator Registration Act (CORA) to make property owners "jointly and severally" liable for violating laws governing farmworker camps by lessees or squatters. This approach intends to use CORA as an enforcement tool when other unrelated tools should be used by law enforcement to halt illegal cannabis operations. Amending CORA in the way contemplated by HB 3194 expands liability beyond the stated goals the bill's proponents. As written, HB 3194 would not limit liability to illegal marijuana grows. Instead, it would make all landowners liable for any housing that fails to comply with CORA.

While Section 2(2) attempts to provide a defense for landowners, the defense offered is essentially the reverse of what it should be and needs to be. Proving that a landowner "had no actual knowledge of reason to know [that a farmworker camp did not comply with the law]" is nearly impossible, essentially presuming someone guilty until they prove their innocence. This standard is antithetical to American values and jurisprudence and needs to be reworked entirely.

Because HB 3194 expands liability onto landowners and farmers, property owners and employers may seek to place limits on renting homes to and for workers. Such a constriction would harm the viability and sustainability of labor-intensive agriculture, the rural economy, trade, and other commercial activities. The increased penalties in Section 4

are also problematic, especially as farmers and other housing operators must adjust quickly to OR-OSHA's new ag labor housing rules.

For these reasons, we are opposed to HB 3194. Again, we are in favor of stopping illegal cannabis operations, but the language of HB 3194 does not provide a workable, reasonable, narrowly tailored solution to this issue.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Dilley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Scott" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Dilley".

Scott Dilley
WAFLA | Public Affairs Director
975 Carpenter Rd NE, Ste 201
Lacey, WA 98516
360-581-8153
wafla.org