

Subject: Testimony in Support of HB 3194 – Holding Unregistered Farmworker Camps Accountable

Chair Kropf, Vice-Chairs Chotzen and Wallen, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary,

My name is Debbie Cabrales, and I am the Executive Director at Centro de Servicios Para Campesinos. Our organization provides critical support to farmworkers, and their families, ensuring they have access to essential resources, such as legal aid, integration immigration services, access to targeted health and wellbeing programs, and advocacy against exploitation. Centro de Servicios Para Campesinos is part of the Cannabis Worker Resilience Partnership (CWRP), where we have been able to provide services and help community members who have worked in Oregon's cannabis industry and were left with no pay, horrendous living conditions, exploitation, and trauma.

Working at Centro de Servicios Para Campesinos, we have heard so many stories of community members who have lived in horrible conditions while working in the cannabis industry, which is why I am here to express our strong support for HB 3194, a bill that will help protect workers from *unsafe and illegal housing conditions*.

Many community members that have worked in the cannabis industry have not only been exploited, but have lived through horrible conditions, in places where there is no bathroom, no showers, no potable water, no electricity, no heater or air conditioning-where workers have to bring their own tents to sleep in, live in bare sheds, or make do with tarps and cardboard. One of the community members that we helped through the CWRP program, opened up to us and expressed how the frigid environment, with tasks conducted in cramped metal train containers heated by a small space heater for just a few hours in the morning, left her fingers, toes, and legs numb. The temperatures were near freezing, and the bathrooms, which were a 15-minute walk away, were filthy and unsanitary. The stress and harsh working and living conditions caused severe physical and emotional health issues, including depression, insomnia, and nervous system problems due to the immense physical and emotional stress she was under.

It's really concerning that when illegal cannabis operations suddenly shut down, the landowner just denies any involvement, even though workers have said they saw them talking to the camp operators. Holding landowners accountable, enforcing and increasing penalties is the minimum we can do for community members that are putting their lives at risk and living in horrible conditions that no one should live in, and none of us would want to live in. Landowners should do their due diligence in knowing who they are renting their land to, and be held responsible for the actions of their tenants if those are illegal operations where worker abuse is happening rampantly. Landowners should follow the law, and those who do, and lease their land to a registered, licensed, and endorsed camp operator will not be impacted. Those who allow illegal and unsafe conditions should be held accountable, and should have to pay a penalty of \$2,000 per violation.

Since 2020, most citations for unregistered labor camps have been tied to cannabis operations, but all workers should live in safe and decent housing. Right now, landowners can allow these camps on their property and face no consequences if the camp operators disappear after the season ends.

HB 3194 is a common-sense solution to a serious problem. It protects workers, ensures landowners take responsibility for their property, and strengthens outdated laws.

On behalf of Centro de Servicios Para Campesinos, I urge you to support HB 3194. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Debbie D. Cabrales