

The Pumpkin Patch, Sauvie Island.

My name is Bob Egger and I own The Pumpkin Patch on Sauvie Island established in 1976. I am a second generation farmer and work with my grown children who will hopefully be third generation farmers soon. However with this crushing bill, I am now unsure they will have the opportunity I have had and my parents had.

Our operation consists of a retail division, The Pumpkin Patch, that our city flocks to in October, and our wholesale division where we distribute fresh produce to major grocery store chains. We grow over 60 different crops and we employ up to 200 people by October. We also use the HA 2 program to bring up and pay for 20 workers from Mexico for our field work. We pay them a high wage, plus transportation costs, plus housing. It costs us \$3500 each just to bring them to Oregon.

We are already being forced to pay overtime, which raises the prices of your fruit and vegetables on your table. This also has cut the pay for all farm workers, because farmers have to cut employ hours to afford to grow crops. We've had to cut out crops that don't pay...ie you can't pay \$35 hr for a worker to hoe weeds out of cabbage that sells at market price for 75 cents.

Farmers don't get to set their prices, ever, the market does. And produce coming in from Mexico and other states and countries can be imported cheaper than ours due to cheaper labor and non-restrictive growing regulations.

There will be no way for us to meet the climbing wage increases, the overtime pay rules and increased costs from a new governing board! Why would you choose to hurt farmers and our special economy we have in Oregon with all this beautiful farm ground??

Please oppose HB 2548! We farm on highly regulated EFU ground on Sauvie Island, meaning the only way we can make a living is by growing produce and this would kill us!

Farm workers are currently protected by very strong workplace regulations such as paid sick time and minimum wage. Oregon OSHA has one of the highest worksite inspection rates and has adopted some of the most expansive workplace protections in the country. We already get inspected throughout each season by regulatory agencies in place!

HB 2548 gives non-farmers who don't understand our industry the power to set wages and safety rules that go far beyond current protections, adding more regulatory and cost burden to farms. This is unbelievable with everything we are currently facing.

There is no accountability for the decisions they make, even if their decisions ultimately close farms or result in layoffs. Will you keep The Pumpkin Patch afloat when you vote for it and we have to shut it down for the whole city and Oregon who visits our farm??

I am strongly opposed to the proposal in HB 2548 that eliminates at-will employment for farms. HB 2548 carves out farms and puts us at risk for costly claims for making necessary staffing decisions. All other private sectors in Oregon enjoy at-will status, but farms—whose employment needs are impacted by weather, yields, trade and market conditions, pests and diseases—would not. This is unfair. This bill doesn't help workers or consumers; it just makes farming harder and more Expensive which *makes your food more expensive!!*

We have already had to reduce worker hours, change crops, and are looking to automate to control labor costs associated with overtime; HB 2548 would have more severe Consequences.

I urge you to vote no on HB 2548 to protect Oregon farms and save our family farm!!

Sincerely,
Bob and Kari Egger
The Pumpkin Patch
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