



TO: House Committee on Labor and Workplace Standards
FROM: Rev. Connie Yost, President
SUBJECT: Yes on HB 3193

Dear Chair Grayber, Vice-Chair Elmer, Vice-Chair Muñoz, and Members of the Committee,

I am the Rev. Connie Yost, President of Farm Worker Ministry Northwest. I represent the faith community and people of conscience in Oregon, who support and advocate for our essential farm workers.

I am writing in support of HB 3193, the Farmworker Disaster Relief Fund. Farmworkers are often the first to experience the impacts of extreme weather conditions. Research has shown that agricultural workers are 35 times more likely to die from heat-related stress than workers in other industries. Extreme heat and drought also are fueling more intense wildfire seasons, and outdoor workers are increasingly having to deal with harmful exposures to wildfire smoke and unhealthy air quality.

HB 3193 will provide temporary financial relief to farm workers in Oregon who lose work or wages due to extreme weather conditions. HB 3193 will define a “qualifying disaster” in regards to extreme weather as more than just extreme heat and smoke. This includes snow storms, ice storms, heavy raining, flooding, pandemics, etc. conditions in which our farmworkers have continued working despite the dangerous impacts to them physically and mentally.

Farm workers put food on our tables and contribute over \$6 billion to our state’s economy, and are too often not afforded a decent wage, decent living conditions or safe working conditions. We must not base our economy on the exploitation of our farm workers!

People of conscience in Oregon urge you to vote YES on HB 3193, to provide protections and support for our *truly essential* farm workers in Oregon.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Rev. Connie Yost, President
Farm Worker Ministry Northwest