

Submitter: Ethel Gullette
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Labor and Workplace Standards
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3193

TO: House Committee on Labor and Workplace Standards

FROM: Ethel Gullette

SUBJECT: Yes on HB 3193

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

My name is Ethel Gullette, I live in Beaverton, Oregon, and I am writing in strong support of HB 3193, the Farmworker Disaster Relief Fund.

There is no question that farmworkers are essential in Oregon. They do the backbreaking work of providing us with the food we eat. I am so grateful for the dedicated work that they do. Historically, farmworkers have been excluded from protections despite contributing billions of dollars to Oregon's economy. Farmworkers continue to be exploited, and continue to work in dangerous conditions for little pay. Farmworkers are more than the labor they provide for the state. They are fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, friends, neighbors, and Oregonians. They are human beings that deserve more respect and protections.

Farmworkers continued to work throughout the pandemic with little or no protections. They weren't provided clean water or PPE until community organizations became first responders and provided that for them. It took a global pandemic for people in our state and country to recognize how essential farmworkers are. Farmworkers should not be forced to choose between working in dangerous weather conditions and missing out on a paycheck. They should not be forced to work in brutal heat or cold. We need to think about the well-being of farmworkers and to be aware of the toll on their bodies of working in extreme weather.

HB 3193, the Farmworker Disaster Relief Fund, will provide farmworkers who lose work and wages financial relief. Climate change is more than just extreme heat and smoke. HB 3193 will highlight this and define a qualifying disaster as more than just heat and smoke. Disasters include drought, wildfire, earthquake, hurricane, flood, excessive heat, tornado, winter storm, snowstorm, freeze, hail, smoke, tsunami, volcanic eruption or other adverse weather event, in addition to pandemic or other public health crisis. Everyone deserves to be protected from dangerous working conditions.

I urge Oregon's legislators to think more critically about the reality of farmworkers' lives in Oregon. Listen to their stories and their lived experiences. Their stories are valuable and deserve to be heard without fear of retaliation.

Please vote in favor of HB 3193 to provide protections and support for our farmworkers in Oregon.

Sincerely,

Ethel Gullette