



## **Blown Away Ranch**

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March 8, 2025

Oregon State Legislature  
Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

### **Subject: Opposition to HB 2548**

As a farmer and business owner, I am outraged by the introduction of HB 2548. Out of the fifteen legislators sponsoring this bill, only one claims business ownership according to their legislative biographies (sans one who was a wikipedia find). Asinine. This is yet another example of out-of-touch policymakers—many of whom have never run a business, hired employees, or worked in production agriculture—attempting to impose unnecessary and harmful regulations on an industry they clearly do not understand. Furthermore, the same bill sponsors range in geography from Eugene, Salem, Portland and Troutdale. All urban.

HB 2548 undermines the fundamental relationship between farm employers and their workers by transferring critical decisions about staffing, wages, benefits, and training to an unelected, unaccountable bureaucratic body. If passed, this bill will strip farmers of their ability to manage their operations effectively and jeopardize the livelihoods of the very workers it claims to protect.

### **What does HB 2548 do?**

- Establishes an unelected governing body with unchecked power to impose new regulations on farms every two years, including increasing minimum wages, mandating rest breaks, controlling work schedules and hours, and dictating uniform training on worker rights by state-certified organizations (such as unions and trial attorneys).
- Imposes additional workplace health and safety requirements beyond what OR-OSHA already enforces, creating duplicative and burdensome regulations.

- Eliminates at-will employment in agriculture and restricts an employer's ability to discipline or terminate employees, opening the door for frivolous lawsuits and excessive legal liability. This bill grants a private right of action to employees and trial attorneys who disagree with a farm's disciplinary or termination decisions, putting undue legal and financial pressure on farm owners.

As someone with extensive experience in agriculture and business management, I do not take these concerns lightly. I hold a double master's degree and have firsthand knowledge of what it takes to run a farm, hire employees, and maintain fair working conditions. The assumption that farm owners do not understand labor management is both insulting and false. The reality is that farm work is demanding, and it requires flexibility to account for weather conditions, crop needs, and market pressures. This bill ignores the realities of agricultural work and instead imposes rigid mandates that will only make it harder for farmers to stay in business.

HB 2548 is an outright attack on Oregon's agricultural industry. It threatens family farms, rural communities, and the very workers it pretends to support. If this bill passes, it will drive up costs, increase legal risks, and push farms out of business—leading to fewer jobs, less local food production, and increased reliance on foreign imports.

I strongly urge you to oppose HB 2548 and instead work with those of us who actually understand farming to develop policies that support both employers and employees without destroying Oregon agriculture.

Thank you,

Erin Hansell-Heideman  
Owner/Operator Blown Away Ranch  
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