



House Committee on Labor & Workforce Standards

March 12, 2025

Oregon Farm Bureau Comments on HB 2541

Oregon Farm Bureau (“OFB”) is the state’s largest general agriculture organization, representing over 6,500 family farms and ranches that produce more than 220 agricultural commodities. From hops and hazelnuts to cattle, clover, and timber, with operations spanning just a few acres to thousands, our members utilize all farming methods including organic, conventional, regenerative, biotech, and even no-tech.

Oregon Farm Bureau worked with Rep. Boshart Davis and then-Rep. Karin Power in 2019 to pass milk expression protections that aligned with federal law. The legislation that was adopted, HB 2593, was negotiated with farm employers and other business interests. HB 2593 (2019):

- Requires employers to provide additional rest breaks to a worker to express milk for a child 18 months of age or younger.
- Allows employers with 10 or fewer employees to seek a qualifying “undue hardship.”
- Requires employers to make a reasonable effort to provide a private location where the employee can express milk.

It is our understanding that Oregon’s milk expression law currently applies to agricultural workers, as it does to other sectors. Other state and national commodity groups interpret ORS 653.077 as applicable to farm workers,¹² as does OFB’s own HR support service, Farm Employer Education & Legal Defense Service (“FEELDS”). FEELDS supports our members by assisting them in implementing milk expression policies on the farm, such as designating private areas in barns or trailers.

After consulting with BOLI, we are not aware of any complaints against farms regarding milk expression protections under ORS 653.077. However, we recognize that a small subset of workers may fall under the exception to minimum wage under ORS 653.020(1)(c)—piece-rate hand harvest or pruning laborers who commute daily AND work less than 13 weeks in agriculture annually. While this group is likely limited, HB 2541 could clarify their coverage.

¹ <https://www.oregonwinegrowers.org/rt-vineyards-employment/#workers>

² <https://nationaldairyfarm.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Oregon-Fact-Sheet-2024-Update.pdf>

OFB is neutral on HB 2541, as written. We participated in good faith in the 2019 negotiations and continue assisting farm employers with milk expression policies. Other agricultural commodity organizations provide similar support. Agricultural workplaces, especially smaller or remote operations, sometimes face challenges, like limited private spaces, and the law's flexibility may assist compliance. For small farms with tight margins, we appreciate that the bill retains the undue hardship exemption.

OFB stands ready to work with legislators, BOLI, and stakeholders to ensure any proposed changes balance worker protections with the operational needs of Oregon's diverse, family farms.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.