

Submitter: Beth Poteet
On Behalf Of: Sacred Organizing Coalition
Committee: House Committee On Labor and Workplace Standards
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3193

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

My name is Beth Poteet, I live in NE Portland, and I am a member of the Sacred Organizing Coalition and Ainsworth United Church of Christ. I am writing to express my strong support for HB 3193, the Farmworker Disaster Relief Fund.

I grew up in the Yakima Valley, an agricultural-based region in eastern Washington where farmworkers are the backbone of the economy. As a public health professional, I know that farmworkers are often the first to experience the impacts of extreme weather conditions. Due to the impacts of climate change, we are seeing hotter and drier summers with increasing wildfires and unhealthy air quality. Our winters are also becoming more extreme, with more ice and snow storms, heavy rainfall, and flooding.

These extreme weather events create unhealthy, unsafe, and at times deadly working conditions for farmworkers. During the 2021 heat dome, Sebastian Francisco Perez, age 38, died from heat exposure while moving irrigation lines in St. Paul, OR. HB 3193 would provide temporary relief to farmworkers in Oregon who lose work or wages due to these extreme weather events. It would provide the necessary support to those who keep us fed and provide economic stability to our state. No one should have to choose between their health and providing for their families, like Mr. Perez did.

I urge you to vote YES on HB 3193 to provide protections and support for our farmworkers.

Sincerely,
Beth Poteet, MSW