

TO: House Committee on Labor and Workplace Standards  
FROM: Laulea Miike  
SUBJECT: Support HB 3193 Farmworker Disaster Relief Fund

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

My name is Laulea Miike, and I live in our state capital, Salem, Oregon. **I am a sophomore majoring in environmental science at Willamette University**, and I am writing in support of HB 3193, the Farmworker Disaster Relief Fund.

- Farmworkers are essential everywhere, but especially in Oregon. Over 100,000 farmworkers power our state's leading industry: agriculture, worth around \$42 billion. **These people do important, difficult, dangerous work in one of the largest sectors of our economy, feeding our families across Oregon.** We owe them some relief when events out of their control threaten their livelihoods.
- **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.  
On top of that, **farmworkers already face cost burdens of low wages and a lack of affordable housing** that is in good condition, not overcrowded, and doesn't contribute to health issues. And, thirty percent of farmworkers in Oregon and Washington experience poverty, compared to 14% of all U.S. households.
- **More extreme weather is only increasing and intensifying. This problem will only get worse, we need to work now.** These events will destroy our farmworkers and food systems if we continue to lack vital relief when disaster strikes. 98% of Oregon's farmworkers are Latino, primarily of Mexican origin; BIPOC, low-income, and rural communities are most at risk for climate change-related disasters, despite contributing the least to climate change, and they must be prioritized. Our ability to utilize state funding for Farmworker Disaster Relief allows for continued and expedited help for those communities.

HB 3193 will provide temporary financial relief to farmworkers 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 rain, flooding, pandemics, etc. Conditions in which our farmworkers have continued working in, despite the dangerous impacts to them physically and mentally.

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

Sincerely,  
*Laulea Miike*