

Submitter: Dustin Smith
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Labor and Workplace Standards
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2548

My name is ___Dustin Smith___, and I grow ___480 acres of Oregon Hazelnuts_____.

Please oppose HB 2548.

Oregon already has some of the highest labor costs in the country. Hazelnut growers don't get to set prices for our crop, so there is no way to recover the increased costs passed by the new governing Board.

Farm workers are already protected by very strong workplace regulations. And Oregon OSHA has one of the highest worksite inspection rates and has adopted some of the most expansive workplace protections in the country.

HB 2548 gives unelected bureaucrats the power to set wages and safety rules that go far beyond current protections, adding more regulatory and cost burdens to local farms, but not to other industries. There is no accountability for the decisions the Board makes, even if their decisions close farms or result in layoffs.

I am strongly opposed to the proposal in HB 2548 that eliminates at-will employment for farmers. At-will employment is the law in nearly every state. But HB 2548 carves out farms and puts employers at risk for costly claims for making necessary staffing decisions. All other sectors in Oregon would be at-will—this bill just targets agriculture. Not only is that unfair, but it will likely result in job loss as employers plan workforce needs to address that risk.

This bill doesn't help workers or consumers; it just makes farming harder and more expensive.

Many farms have already had to reduce worker hours or automate to control labor costs associated with overtime; HB 2548 would have more severe consequences.

I urge you to vote no on HB 2548 to protect Oregon producers and the jobs we are currently able to provide.