

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

TO: House Committee on Labor and Workplace Standards
FROM: Sarah Guest
SUBJECT: Yes on HB 3193

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

My name is Sarah Guest, I live in Bend, and I am writing in strong support of HB 3193, the Farmworker Disaster Relief Fund.

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.

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 raining, flooding, pandemics, etc. Conditions in which our farmworkers have continued working in despite the dangerous impacts to them physically and mentally.

I live in Central Oregon where wildfires are a threat. I drive by a local farm when the smoke is thick, wondering how they are coping with it. We seem to have more and more smoky days every summer. I worry about farmworkers being at risk during a disaster, causing them to give up such an essential business. I also worry about our food system in general, with tariffs, inflation and rising prices. I feel we need to protect and support our local farmers as much as we can, especially as the climate crisis escalates.

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

Sincerely,

Sarah Guest, LCSW
Behavioral Health Consultant
St. Charles Bend East Family Care