

TO: House Committee on Labor and Workplace Standards
FROM: Jennifer Martinez-Medina
SUBJECT: Yes on HB 3193

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

My name is Jennifer Martinez-Medina, I live in Portland and teach in Salem. I write in strong support of HB 3193, the Farmworker Disaster Relief Fund.

According to the 2015-2019 National Agricultural Worker Survey (NAWS), only 21% of farmworkers earn an annual income of \$30,000. A vast majority of farmworkers, especially those who work by the piece rate, may earn less than \$10,000. The dynamics of these low paid wages with the increasing amount of extreme weather, pandemics, and extreme temperatures, creates a double bind for farmworkers. When they lose work to protect their health, this is a direct threat to their daily livelihood.

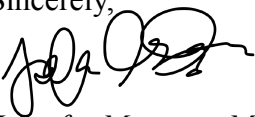
Agricultural workers are often the first to experience the impacts of extreme weather conditions. Research has shown that agricultural workers are 35 times more likely to die from heat-related stress than workers in other industries. Extreme heat and drought also are fueling more intense wildfire seasons, and outdoor workers are increasingly having to deal with harmful exposures to wildfire smoke and unhealthy air quality. We have witnessed this intensity throughout Oregon, including the devastating Almeda wildfires

I'm both a community member and researcher in farmworker communities. One farmworker from the Willamette Valley shared how he walked through the thick sheet of ice, during the ice storm of 2024 in order to make it to work. In the process he injured his knee and continued working because as he puts it, "there is no other option." I heard countless stories of the food and housing insecurity that ensues when extreme weather occurs. This financial strain becomes worries and anxiety that deteriorate farmworkers and their families physical and mental health.

The baseline relief under HB 3193 will be a major step towards affirming that farmworkers deserve healthy work industries that prioritize their well-being and dignity.

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

Sincerely,



Jennifer Martinez-Medina, PhD