

Submitter: Geri Leung  
On Behalf Of:  
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 Geri, I live in Portland, OR and I am writing in strong support of HB 3193, the Farmworker Disaster Relief Fund. My mom and I are immigrants to the USA. We became US citizens in 1994 when my mom was in her 30s and married a man in the Navy, and when I was 4 years old. Growing up I saw how my mom struggled to ask for help due in part because of the language barrier, low confidence in navigating the job market and just being a single mom with two kids (my dad was often deployed). Many farm workers share the same experience and feelings that I saw my mom experience which is why I'm writing you.

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 am in support of the disaster relief fund because I know what it feels like to be on the outside of the language and the community because we were different and we were often scared to ask for help. I wish someone helped my mom when she was by herself raising two kids during a hurricane (which happened often in Virginia Beach) and we didn't have the stock pile of supplies and food to potentially help us if the hurricane got bad. Thankfully it didn't but that's not the case for many farm workers who do experience disasters.

Now, I own a food truck in Portland with my husband and the value of being there for the community is more important than ever. We rely on farm workers to provide the ingredients for the food that we make—Filipino food—the food my mom would make for

us. Together we are breaking down barriers in celebrating what makes us unique which is what being American is all about. Without farm workers we're not able to nourish our community or ourselves. We want sustainable support for farm workers because they truly are the backbone of our country.

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

Sincerely,  
Geraldine Leung