

Submitter: Timothy Wastell
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Labor and Workplace Standards
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3193

TO: House Committee on Labor and Workplace Standards
FROM: Timothy Wastell
SUBJECT: Yes on HB 3193

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

My name is Timothy Wastell, I live in Portland 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.

As a chef, researcher, advocate for open pollinated plant breeding and seed production, and farmers market worker I strongly support any support for forgotten, attacked, marginalized or otherwise “swept under” members of our community and members of our local food systems.

In 26 years of food work, always surrounded by hardworking non white males, many of whom almost always received smaller paychecks and were rarely provided with insurance or any real on-paper job security, I realize the position of privilege I and many of my peers have benefited from.

This fact is not lost on many of us and many of us realize that there has never in our lifetime been a more important moment to participate in the fight for food justice for the ones that feed our country.

Sincerely,

Timothy