

TO: House Committee on Labor and Workplace Standards
FROM: Angela Chen
SUBJECT: Yes on HB3193

Dear Co-Chairs Representative Dacia Grayber, Lucetta Elmer, Lesly Muñoz, and members of the Committee on Labor and Workplace Standards,

My name is Angela Chen, I am a fourth year Psychology and Sociology student attending Willamette University in Salem, OR. With increasing natural disasters occurring across our state, immediate financial support is needed to address concerns associated with worsening workplace environments. **Farmworkers shouldn't have to choose between losing income and working in a dangerous environment.** This is why I support HB3193, which will provide farmworkers with a vital disaster relief program.

As a local resident in Salem, I have witnessed the invaluable labor of farmworkers and the impact of climate disaster on our community. Climate change has led to natural disasters such as wildfires and a dangerous global increase in temperature. As someone diagnosed with asthma, during the summer wildfires of 2021 even brief moments of smoke exposure outdoors would exacerbate my symptoms. Inhalation of wildfire smoke would've caused long-term health consequences if I did not have the financial resources to call out of work and healthcare coverage that provided affordable asthma medication.

As a student who cares deeply about labor policy and practices, it is impossible to not notice how worsening natural disasters have the **most negative consequences** for the welfare of Oregonian farmworkers. Heat related deaths and illnesses from **climate change disproportionately affects agricultural workers** whose average number of days spent working in unsafe conditions will [double by mid-century, and, without mitigation, triple](#) by the end of it. Farmworker wellbeing is in jeopardy with rapidly developing rates of natural disaster. University of Washington conducted a research on farmworkers and found that [3 in 4 farmworkers reported exposure to an unhealthy amount of smoke but reported no changes made to their routine or activities](#). Despite greater frequency working in unsafe conditions, farmworkers are expected to maintain current demands for labor while their health is at risk.

Furthermore, Oregonian farm workers **cannot afford to call out of work when natural disasters occur**. A Study of Farmworker Housing in Hood River, Marion, Morrow, and Yamhill Counties in Oregon found [32% of farmworkers are in poverty in Oregon, a much larger percentage compared to 14% at the national level](#). **Farmworkers in Oregon are being asked to choose between their health and wages**, leading to decisions that worsen their physical condition. In addition to the challenge of poverty, treating workplace related health issues is costly and [less than 20% of hired farmworkers receive employer- provided health insurance](#). Lack of insurance and low wages prevent farmworkers from seeking treatment for workplace related health issues. Workers shouldn't have to put their safety on the line just to earn a living.

As an essential workforce in the Oregonian agricultural industry, we must consider meaningful solutions that address the long term effects of climate change for farmworkers. House Bill 3193 can provide support for the foreseeable natural disasters that harm farmworker's health. This will greatly benefit Oregonian farmworkers and the communities they serve. Voting yes on HB 3193 is an essential next step to address the financial ramifications associated with climate disaster that farmworkers are currently shouldering alone. Please vote yes on House Bill 3193 so we can protect Oregonian farmworkers!

Thank you for your support,
Angela Chen