

Submitter: Deborah Bell
On Behalf Of: S.O.C.
Committee: House Committee On Labor and Workplace Standards
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3193

TO: House Committee on Labor and Workplace Standards

FROM: Deborah Bell

SUBJECT: Yes on HB 3193

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

My name is Deborah Bell, I live in Portland, OR and I am writing in strong support of HB 3193, the Farm worker Disaster Relief Fund. Oregon has over 72,000 farm workers.

Farm 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.

HB 3193 will provide temporary financial relief to farm workers 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 farm workers have continued working in despite the dangerous impacts to them physically and mentally. Due to documentation, most farm workers are generally ineligible to receive federally funded benefits such as Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). Individuals who are undocumented are less likely to assert their labor rights out of fear of retaliation or worse, deportation.

Sincerely,
Deborah Bell