

Submitter: Parker Van De Wetering
On Behalf Of: WestM
Committee: House Committee On Labor and Workplace Standards
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3193

TO: House Committee on Labor and Workplace Standards
FROM: Your name
SUBJECT: Yes on HB 3193

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

My name is Parker Van De Wetering, I live in Corvallis, and I am writing in 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.

I personally worked in a blueberry packing facility through the heat wave of 2021, which decimated crops across the state and killed over 100 people. I was lucky to be working inside, sheltered from the heat, but many were not so lucky. I lost out on two weeks of income due to the blueberry crop failing that summer, and I remember looking down at the shriveled, pale fruit on the day it was 118 degrees, thinking to myself, “dear God, how are people still picking these, and why?” I realized the farm workers out in the field had no options, that they were forced by low wages and resource scarcity to work through lethal conditions. Now we have the power to grant those workers the option to avoid working through potentially lethal conditions.

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

Sincerely,
Parker Van De Wetering