



March 10, 2025

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **support of HB 3193, which will create a permanent relief program under the Oregon Health Authority to support farmworkers who lose work and wages due to extreme weather conditions.**

My name is Alberto Gallegos and I am providing testimony on behalf of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), Oregon. SEIU Oregon is composed of SEIU Local 503 and SEIU Local 49, which together represent over 87,000 people. Local 49 represents private sector janitors, property service workers, light manufacturing, and healthcare workers; while Local 503 represents homecare workers, private nonprofit workers, in-home childcare providers, nursing home workers, and state and local government employees.

Farmworkers are essential to the agricultural economy of our state yet their rights and protections have historically been denied. Since the passage of the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) in 1935, farmworkers have been intentionally excluded from collective bargaining rights. This exclusion was part of a deliberate effort to maintain control over the labor force, driven by racist policies and ideologies. In fact, the exclusion of farmworkers from the Federal Labor Standards Act of 1938, which established the minimum wage, overtime pay, and child labor regulations, was largely based on the “racial question” raised by Southern legislators. This discriminatory practice has left farmworkers vulnerable for decades, unable to organize or demand the protections they deserve.

Today, Oregon is home to over 72,000 farmworkers, many of whom are forced to live paycheck to paycheck, struggling to make ends meet. The average farmworker in Oregon earns around \$34,500 annually, working long hours in grueling conditions to support their families. Despite their hard work, they often face severe financial instability, especially when extreme weather—like heat, drought, or wildfire smoke—disrupts their ability to work. These workers are repeatedly forced to endure conditions that compromise their health and safety, with little to no recourse or financial support.

HB 3193 is a crucial step toward addressing this longstanding injustice. This bill would provide temporary financial relief to farmworkers who lose work or wages due to extreme weather conditions. The legislation goes beyond just extreme heat and wildfire smoke, recognizing that a “qualifying disaster” should also include snowstorms, ice storms, heavy rain, flooding, and other severe weather events. Farmworkers, who often continue working despite dangerous conditions, deserve a safety net when the very weather that sustains their livelihoods also puts their lives at risk.



**Service Employees International Union – Oregon State Council**

SEIU Oregon urges the Committee to support HB 3193.

Thank you,

Alberto Gallegos  
Political and Government Relations Organizer  
SEIU Oregon State Council