

TO: House Committee on Labor and Workplace Standards  
FROM: Simone Baumgartner  
SUBJECT: Yes on HB 3193

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

My name is Simone Baumgartner, I live in Corvallis, Oregon, and I am writing in support of HB 3193, the Farmworker Disaster Relief Fund.

I am writing because this bill reminded me of the intense heat wave of the summer of 2020. I was living in Portland at the time, and as the temperatures rose my mothers home, which did not have air conditioning or heat, became unbearable to stay in. We were sitting on the hardwood floors in our kitchen to relieve ourselves of the heat, eating salad and crackers to avoid turning on the stove, when my mother decided enough was enough. We rented a hotel room for the rest of the week, each of us letting a sigh of relief out as we opened the room and the cool air flooded out.

In addition to my own experience, I remember my family friend who lives south of Portland had to evacuate when the heat wave caused fires to spread rapidly across Oregon. Without the ability to take her farm animals with her during the evacuation, my friend had to let her horses, goats, and chickens loose from their fields. She was worried about potentially losing them but had no choice because she did not want to trap them on a property where the fires might harm them. Her account made me think a lot about how farmworkers and other owners of livestock are affected by these increasingly frequent fires and other disasters.

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.

Thank you so much for considering my testimony, I hope you too choose to support this vastly important bill.