



[www.RogueClimate.org](http://www.RogueClimate.org) || PO Box 1980, Phoenix, OR 97535 || 541-301-9204

Coos Bay Office: 243 S. 2nd St. Coos Bay, OR 97420 || 541- 816-0758

Re: Rogue Climate Testimony regarding HB 3193

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

Thank you for the opportunity to comment in support of HB 3193: Relating to farmworker disaster relief.

Rogue Climate serves and works alongside Southern Oregon and South Coast communities most impacted by climate change, including low-income, rural, youth, and communities of color, by organizing for clean energy, sustainable jobs, and a healthy environment. We do so through leadership development, political education, and campaigns for policies that benefit our communities.

In the 2021 legislature, \$10 million of the \$100 million Drought Relief Package was allocated to create the Climate Change Fund, designed to support farmworkers who lost work and wages due to the intense weather conditions. The Climate Change Fund provided temporary financial relief to 9,569 agriculture workers in 34 counties when extreme heat or smoke pollution prevented them from safely working. In 2023, an additional \$1 million was allocated to this fund, which was fully distributed within 48 hours. This temporary support is not enough, and the need continues to outpace available resources as extreme weather conditions become more and more prevalent.

Working conditions become dangerous when there is extreme heat, smoke, heavy flooding, snowstorms, ice storms, or hail. Farmworkers face a difficult decision: refuse work and risk not getting paid, or continue working and jeopardize their health and safety in unsafe conditions. In Oregon, the average farmworker earns approximately \$34,500 annually, often living paycheck to paycheck while supporting their families. Many cannot afford to stop working.

As we all know, the climate crisis is not a one-time event and extreme weather is not limited to heat or smoke. It is essential that we define “climate disaster” at the state level in a way that reflects the full range of extreme weather events that farmworkers may face, including heat, smoke, heavy flooding, snowstorms, ice storms, and hail. Such a definition would ensure that this program is comprehensive and able to respond to the diverse and evolving impacts of climate change.

Dangerous outdoor working conditions for our farmworkers continue, and we need to establish a long-term solution to help them navigate ongoing climate-related challenges. We urge you to consider the creation of a permanent program under the Oregon Health Authority by voting ‘yes’ in support of HB 3193.



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Sincerely,

Jess Grady-Benson, Organizing Director

Zöe Serrano, Legislative Coordinator