

Submitter: D Vice

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Labor and Workplace Standards

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2548

I write to express my strong concerns about HB 2548 and its potential to create unnecessary hardship for Oregon's farmers and agricultural workers.

Over the past two decades, I have witnessed firsthand how Oregon's legislation has shaped the farming industry. While some policies have been beneficial, others have presented significant challenges. HB 2548, if passed, could have devastating consequences for the farm I work at, and potentially for many others across the state.

Due to recent changes in overtime laws, my employer has already had to reduce employee work hours and invest in automation to offset increased labor costs. If HB 2548 is enacted, the additional financial burden could lead to further job losses as farms turn to automation to cope with higher labor costs. Unfortunately, for many farms, the ripple effect may lead to closures, which would not only harm the agricultural industry but also impact local communities and economies.

One of the most concerning aspects of this bill is its proposal to eliminate at-will employment for farm workers. Unlike any other sector in Oregon, agriculture would be uniquely affected by this change. At-will employment allows farmers the flexibility to manage seasonal labor needs and address fluctuating market demands. Removing this flexibility could make it harder for farms to navigate the already unpredictable nature of farming, leading to potential layoffs and financial strain.

As both a farm worker and a consumer, I also worry about the impact HB 2548 will have on food prices. With increased labor costs, farms will inevitably pass on those expenses to consumers, leading to higher prices for fruits, vegetables, and nuts. This could disproportionately affect Oregon families, especially those who rely on locally grown food.

Ultimately, HB 2548 risks doing more harm than good. While it may have noble intentions, it threatens the survival of Oregon's farming industry and the livelihoods of its workers. I urge you to vote NO on HB 2548 to protect the future of Oregon's farms, workers, and consumers.