



A STRONG VOICE FOR OREGON'S WORKERS

March 10, 2025

Chair Grayber, Vice-Chairs Munoz and Elmer and members of the committee,

The Oregon AFL-CIO represents 300,000 workers across Oregon and is a voice for all workers in the legislative process.

Oregon's farmworkers are the backbone of one of the largest sectors in our economy. Yet, as other workplace protections have increased over the past 50 years, Oregon's farm workers remain excluded from some of the most basic protections other sectors of the economy have been subject to for sometimes nearly a century. Undocumented worker are also less likely to assert their labor rights out of fear of retaliation or worse, deportation.¹ They are often disproportionately utilizing and impacted by wholly or partially federally funded benefits such as medicaid, SNAP, and TANF.

Further, farmworkers are often the first to experience the impacts of extreme weather conditions. Research shows agriculture workers are 35 times more likely to suffer from heat related deaths compared to other industries.² As extreme heat and wildfires become more common in Oregon, too often agricultural workers are forced to choose between working in dangerous conditions or losing out on a paycheck. 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.

Farmworkers ultimately make our economy run. They should not be faced with terrible economic and health decisions simply because of the nature of their work. We encourage your support of HB 3193.

¹ Reyes Bercerra, Natalia. "Impacts of the Climate Crisis on Farmworkers." *American Lung Association*, 13 10 2023, <https://www.lung.org/blog/climate-change-impacts-farmworkers>. Accessed 21 02 2025.

² Gubernot, Diane M., et al. "Characterizing occupational heat-related mortality in the United States, 2000-2010: an analysis using the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries database." *Am J Ind Med.*, 2015. *National Library of Medicine*, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4657558/>. Accessed 21 02 2025.