

March 11th, 2025

Joint Committee on Ways and Means

Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301



Dear Co-Chairs Senator Kate Lieber and Representative Tawna Sanchez, and Co-Vice Chairs Senator Fred Girod, Representative David Gomberg, and Representative Greg Smith,

The Oregon Seed Association (OSA), representing over 50 years of service to Oregon's agricultural seed industry, wishes to express its strong opposition to House Bill 2548. Our members, who market and distribute Oregon's renowned agricultural seed to over 120 countries across six continents, are deeply concerned about the detrimental impact this legislation would have on our industry and the broader agricultural community.

Key Concerns:

- **Employer-Worker Relationship:** HB 2548 undermines the direct relationship between employers and workers by imposing rigid, one-size-fits-all mandates.
- **Financial Burden & Litigation Risk:** Shifting the burden of proof onto employers for terminations would expose farms to costly legal battles—averaging \$75,000 per settlement—jeopardizing their survival.
- **Economic Hardships:** Oregon farms are still recovering from poor yields and financial losses in 2023-24. Additional regulatory burdens could push many to reduce operations, lay off employees, or sell to larger entities.
- **Staffing Flexibility:** Agriculture is unpredictable, requiring adaptable staffing decisions. HB 2548's rigid policies would make it harder for farms to retain a workforce and respond to market conditions.
- **Redundant Regulations:** Existing labor laws already protect farmworkers, making this bill unnecessary and burdensome.

In light of these concerns, the OSA urges the Joint Committee on Ways and Means to reject HB 2548. Preserving the flexibility and sustainability of Oregon's agricultural sector is crucial, especially for family-owned farms that form the backbone of our rural communities.

Thank you for considering our perspective on this critical issue.

Sincerely,

Karen Withers

Karen Withers
Executive Director
Oregon Seed Association