

Submitter: Erik Zander
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Labor and Workplace Standards
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2548

I write to express my strong opposition to HB 2548 and its -2 amendment, which would create a Workforce Standards Board for agriculture and impose sweeping new regulations on Oregon's farm employers.

This bill effectively unionizes farm work at an industry level without giving workers or employers a say. It places unelected bureaucrats in charge of mandating higher wages, work schedules, training requirements, and additional workplace regulations—at least every two years. Oregon farms already operate under some of the strictest labor and safety laws in the nation, and HB 2548 adds another layer of costly, unnecessary mandates that will threaten the viability of family farms and agricultural businesses.

Additionally, eliminating at-will employment in agriculture is a dangerous overreach. HB 2548 creates new legal risks by allowing employees or trial attorneys to sue employers over termination or disciplinary decisions. The -2 amendment worsens the bill by stacking the Workforce Standards Board with OR-OSHA officials and plaintiffs' attorneys, ensuring an agenda-driven regulatory process that benefits special interests rather than the industry as a whole. The allowance for emotional damages and one-sided attorney fee awards further incentivizes frivolous lawsuits, placing an enormous burden on Oregon's farms.

This bill is a nonstarter. It will increase costs, create legal uncertainty, and undermine Oregon's agricultural industry. I urge you to reject HB 2548 and its amendments.