



March 12, 2025

## House Committee on Labor & Workforce Standards

My name is Devin Cooper and I am the president and owner of Willamette Nurseries.

Willamette Nurseries grows fruit and shade tree rootstocks. The rootstocks we produce are critical to the success of shade tree nurseries throughout the state of Oregon and across the country.

I am asking the committee to oppose HB 2548. This is an extreme piece of legislation that has the potential to have a very negative impact on the agricultural industry throughout the state. The legislation is unnecessary and there is no need for a Governing Board for Agricultural Workforce Standards.

- Oregon already has some of the highest labor costs in the country. Farm workers are currently protected by very strong workplace regulations such as paid sick time and minimum wage.
- Oregon OSHA has one of the highest worksite inspection rates and has adopted some of the most expansive workplace protections in the country. What real issue is this bill trying to solve?
- HB 2548 gives unelected bureaucrats the power to set wages and safety rules that go far beyond current protections, adding more regulatory and cost burden to farms. There is no accountability for the decisions they make, even if their decisions ultimately close farms or result in layoffs. Why is agriculture being singled out for an additional layer of bureaucracy?
- I am strongly opposed to the proposal in HB 2548 that eliminates at-will employment for farms and ranches. HB 2548 carves out farms and puts us at risk for costly claims for making necessary staffing decisions. All other private sectors in Oregon enjoy at-will status, but farms—whose employment needs are impacted by weather, yields, trade and market conditions, pests and diseases—would not. Agriculture needs at-will employment as much or more than any other industry. Why is it being singled out?
- This bill doesn't help workers or consumers; it just makes farming harder and more expensive.
- Many farms have already had to reduce worker hours, change crops, or automate to control labor costs associated with overtime; HB 2548 would have more severe consequences.

- I urge the committee to vote no on HB 2548 to protect Oregon farms and ranches and the jobs we currently provide.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony

Respectfully,

Devin Cooper

President

Willamette Nurseries

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Devin Cooper", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.