



E. WERNER RESCHKE
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 55

13 March 2025

To: House Committee on Labor and Workplace Standards

Re: Opposition to HB 2548

Chair Grayber, Vice Chair Elmer, Vice Chair Muñoz and Members of the Committee on Labor and Workplace Standards, **I am writing in strong opposition to HB 2548.** I have heard from numerous constituents with great concern in regard to this bill. My district consists of many small, multi-generational, family farms.

FACT: Oregon already has some of the highest labor costs in the country. Farmers cannot merely increase their prices to cover these new mandates. If they did increase prices, buyers will go elsewhere. Farming is a commodities market, which is extremely price sensitive and very competitive.

FACT: HB 2548 circumvents the legislative process and empowers unelected bureaucrats to set wages and safety rules that go far beyond current protections, adding more regulatory burdens and costs to the farms and ranches I represent. Oregon's state agencies have adopted countless regulations in the last five years with little-to-no accountability for their actions. The legislature has also passed numerous regulations that have made it very difficult for small businesses to remain viable. I am highly concerned about what will happen to producers in my district if HB 2548 were to pass.

FACT: HB 2548 unfairly targets agriculture by eliminating at-will employment. To me, this bill seems to treat farm families like criminals that need oversight with regard to every employment decision they make. It is unfair that farms should be forced keep employees who may not meet performance expectations or adapt to the demands of the job. All other sectors in Oregon would be at-will, but farms—whose employment needs are impacted by weather, yields, trade, pests, diseases, etc.—would not. Not only is that unfair, but it will likely result in job loss, not job security in rural communities.

In summary: HB 2548 doesn't help workers or consumers; it doesn't make food more affordable or more available; it just makes farming harder and more expensive. Please do not move this bill forward.

Sincerely,

E. WERNER RESCHKE

Oregon State Representative, HD 55
The Crater Lake District