

Submitter: Amy Kaser

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Labor and Business

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB999

My name is Amy Kaser, and I farm just outside of The Dalles. I am writing to ask you to support SB 999 and the -1 amendment. This bill will allow small family farms to continue to offer full time year round employee housing as a benefit to our workers.

As you know, finding full time skilled employees is extremely difficult. The housing benefit is one that can be instrumental in recruiting and retaining employees in a housing market that is scarce and expensive. These are private, year-round homes occupied by a family or a single person. OR-OSHA's rules treat workers' private homes as worksites and would require employers to manage these homes round-the-clock, in line with OR-OSHA's January 2025 farmworker camp rules, to avoid penalties. OR-OSHA's application of its authority is not at all in line with federal OSHA, which specifically regulates temporary labor camps provided as a condition of employment.

It is extremely critical to allow farms to keep this benefit in their toolbox in order to retain our labor force. If we are required to manage year-round housing in the same manner as temporary housing, it will be a huge burden to us, and it will also be intrusive to the privacy of our employees, which may discourage them from wanting to live and work on our farms.

The amendment to SB 999 provides clarity that OR-OSHA's authority to enforce its farmworker camp rules apply to registered farmworker camps and not to single family homes that are rented to employees. This is in line with federal authority.

Please vote yes on SB 999 with the amendment. Growers want to be able to continue to provide affordable, single family homes to employees without the risk of penalties from OR-OSHA.