

May 29, 2025

Chair Bowman, Vice Chairs Drazen and Pham, Members of the Committee,

My name is Alexis Jacobson, and I am the International Accounts Manager at BOSSCO Trading LLC. We are a grass straw and hay exporter out of the Willamette Valley, and we containerize our agricultural goods here for export to beef and dairy farms across Japan and Korea. Our product relies heavily upon agricultural labor to efficiently and effectively move our straw from the fields to containers overseas. Today, I urge you to **oppose the HB 2548 -7 amendment**. This bill could be devastating to our farmers, and their ability to produce some of the highest quality crops in the world.

The -7 amendment proposes to spend taxpayer dollars on a study to be conducted by Portland State University that would focus on labor standards and working conditions of farm workers. I am concerned that the bill excludes several important partners in development of a study that are intimately connected to agriculture. Oregon State University, our state's land grant university, has strong connections to and knowledge of all facets of our agricultural sectors, including crop diversity of the industry is excluded. OSU extension reaches all corners of the state with its extension program supported by the state of Oregon, and that reach, and the relationships are not reflected in the proposal. Additionally, the Oregon Department of Agriculture is not consulted in this study.

Our producers navigate the complex and robust workforce protections and employment practices that our Legislature, agencies, and federal partners put in place, and I am concerned that this study focuses on qualitative data rather than cause and effect data, or the impact of what a workforce standard board would do to Oregon's agricultural industries and the adverse impacts it will have for workers. It is clear the proponents intend to use this biased study to tee up the policy for the 2027 Legislative Session with a pre-determined outcome already baked.

The provisions in HB 2548 would significantly increase the costs for the farms we work with that grow grass for seed and that bale grass straw for our export. Every increased cost for our farmers is an added cost we must ask our overseas customers to bear. Our farms are already reeling in labor costs as minimum wage increases, and overtime costs add up year after year. Farmers are working on thin-to-sometimes-negative margins, and this type of pre-determined policy outcome will cause crushing regulatory, financial, and liability implications that threaten the viability of the seed industry as a whole.

We worry it will make it too expensive, too risky, and too difficult for farmers to hire workers. Many farms and other agricultural businesses may then look to reduce their footprint in Oregon as a result should this bill continue to move through the legislature. Over the last five years, there has been a six percent loss of farmland in Oregon - and 65 percent of farms operating in Oregon saw a net cash loss in 2022.

I strongly urge you to keep this in mind: there is not one agricultural commodity produced in America that cannot be produced elsewhere. Forage (hay and straw) is the number one containerized export out of the US West Coast, including our own Port of Portland. We are a high-volume commodity, but we are not a high-value commodity. Each increased cost for our industry edges us out of a global market, heightening the trade deficit between our imported goods and exported goods.

Sincerely,

**Alexis Jacobson**  
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