



Grower Coalition Opposes -7 Amendment to HB 2548

Study Does NOT Change Farm Economics.

Family farmers and ranchers are price takers who sell commodities into domestic and international markets. They typically cannot command more money due to Oregon’s high labor costs and do not have the resources to afford the mandates established by a Farm Labor Standards Board. USDA-collected data from the 2022 census reveals that:

- **Labor costs are 70% higher** on average for Oregon farms than the rest of the U.S.
- Oregon family farms and ranches have struggled with unpredictable markets, low yields, and natural disasters, and **69% saw a net cash loss**.
- Income was an average of **67% lower** for Oregon farms compared to the U.S. in 2022

Oregon is currently in the third year of phasing in overtime for farm workers (HB 4002, 2022). At 48 hours in 2025, farmers and workers are reporting fewer hours and reduced wages, increased mechanization, and a rise in farm bankruptcies. Similar impacts occurred in California, where workers have lost take-home pay of \$100/week on average due to overtime laws.¹

Study is biased to produce an intended outcome.

Not only is the study biased against Oregon’s family farms and ranches, but it ignores the economic impacts of the proposed policy. The qualitative report in the -7 amendment will not provide meaningful data to assess whether the proposed workforce standard board will, in fact, lead to higher wages or improved work experiences. Job loss and reduced wages are more likely, given workers’ experiences with agricultural overtime.

Our coalition does not support a qualitative report that captures individual worker experiences without context. It provides no “cause or effect” data and wastes taxpayer dollars on a study that fails to shed light on the actual consequences of the proposed workforce standards board.

Economic data will be made available to legislators to understand how labor costs impact workers’ hours and wages at the same time as the -7’s study is reported. HB 4002 (2002) directs a quantitative analysis of employment and wage data and report to the Legislature by November 30, 2026 to understand the effects of overtime. The report is the product of interagency consultation across several relevant state agencies on the identified economic impacts of overtime in 2023, 2024, 2025, and 2026, including:

- (a) Employment, wages and hours worked by agricultural workers.
- (b) The total amount of wages paid to agricultural workers.

¹ <https://www.dailydemocrat.com/2025/04/08/researcher-overtime-law-costing-farmworkers-100-per-week/>

- (c) Employment, wages and hours worked in the agricultural sector by quarter, including job vacancies available in natural resources, by quarter.
- (d) Employment, wages and hours worked, separated by size of employer and agricultural sector.
- (e) Recent national and regional trends related to the agricultural workforce, including wages, employment and labor costs

If the Legislature wants to understand the likely outcome of increased regulations and labor costs, it should look no further than this forthcoming quantitative analysis from HB 4002 (2022) to understand the effect of workplace mandates on local farms and ranches and farm workers.

Labor Standards Boards are Job Killers.

A report is not needed to understand the likely outcome of the proposed Farm Workplace Standards Board. California recently advanced a workplace council for fast-food workers. As of March 2025 and following the negotiation of a 33.3% wage increase for fast-food workers, employment at California's fast-food restaurants fell 3.1% from the year before (>22,600 jobs lost), according to seasonally adjusted data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. California's workforce standards board reduced hours and eliminated jobs.²

Labor standards boards have significant trade-offs for workers. Low-margin businesses will have no choice but to cut hours or eliminate jobs if labor costs become too expensive. That is what is at stake in HB 2548.

Other jurisdictions are moving away from workplace standards boards.

- **Minneapolis Mayor Frey vetoed** a citywide workforce standards board in late 2024.
- **Rhode Island Governor McKee vetoed** the state's advisory Nursing Home Workforce Standards Board Act.
- The **Washington legislature did not advance** childcare workforce standards board in 2025.
- California **amended the FAST Act** in 2023 to limit the authority of the fast-food industry workforce standard board.³

Entities that know agriculture and Oregon's labor laws are excluded.

The -7 amendment directs funds to Portland State University (PSU) to conduct a study of Oregon's agricultural sector. However, the study excludes entities with a nexus to agriculture – OSU Extension Service and Oregon Department of Agriculture. PSU does not have the same experience with this sector or trust built with farms and ranches. It is also noticeable that Oregon's state agencies are not consulted in the development of the report – BOLI, Oregon Employment Department, and the Department of Consumer and Business Services are all excluded from the analysis, even though they are impacted by the board proposed in HB 2548 and study in the -7. It is difficult to understand how the report – which excludes relevant agency perspectives and data – will inform future debate on this topic.

We remain opposed to HB 2548 and the -7 amendment.

² <https://www.cnn.com/2025/05/02/business/california-fast-food-wage-hike-one-year-high-prices-jobs>

³ <https://www.californiaemploymentlawreport.com/2023/09/from-the-fast-act-to-ab-1228-a-new-employment-law-era-for-fast-food-in-california/>