

Submitter: Denice Searcy
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3194
NO on HB 3194

This bill appears to be anti-farmer. It also gives favor to special groups as HB 3194 imposes liability for renting farmland in Oregon without a connection to illegal marijuana operations and essentially makes them into collateral damage of illegal cannabis operations. HB 3194 creates considerable legal risk for landowners who lease their land. It makes them "jointly and severally" liable for violations of laws governing farmworker camps by lessees or squatters, even if they have no control or involvement. The bill wrongly holds landowners liable for any failure to comply with the Camp Operator Registration Act (CORA), even in situations outside of the scope of registered farmworker camps.

I plan on buying a farm and having my family to work part of the land while leasing the rest. This is my dream for my family. Leasing farmland helps keep land in production, providing income for aging producers. Many older farmers are retiring, and leasing is an important transition strategy to maintain the farm for subsequent generations. Approximately 96% of Oregon's farms and ranches are family owned. Not every operation has the financial means to engage an attorney to draft a lease agreement for their property.

HB 3194 does not achieve the proponents' goal of preventing cartels from establishing operations in Oregon. Instead, it risks reducing the availability of leased farmland and workforce housing, which are vital to the state's agricultural economy. This bill would be a hardship to land owners as well as renters/lessees. Although I understand the need for cracking down on illegal labor camps connected to illegal growing of marijuana, this bill will not do that and will severely hinder law abiding farmers and ranchers in this state. There is too much damage that could be done to the landowner with this bill. An honest landowner could face significant liability with a bill like this. Landowners cannot be expected to have eyes on their property 24/7. Residential tenancy does not require this and neither should farmland.

Vote NO on HB 3194