



**OREGON  
ASSOCIATION OF  
NURSERIES**

**Comments before the Senate Committee on Rural Communities and Economic Development  
Senate Bill 677 – relating to seasonal farm worker pay  
By Jeff Stone, Executive Director  
Oregon Association of Nurseries  
March 19, 2013**

Chair Roblan and members of the Committee, I am Jeff Stone, Executive Director of the Oregon Association of Nurseries. I am pleased to offer support for Senate Bill 677, a bill which represents thoughtful and collaborative work – the best kind of legislation.

**Oregon nursery industry background**

The nursery and greenhouse industry remains the state’s largest agricultural sector despite a severe economic downturn. As the nation’s second largest nursery state with over \$744 million in sales, our growers ship their products throughout the country. Nearly 75% of nursery stock grown in our state leaves our borders – with over half reaching markets east of the Mississippi River. Nursery association members represent wholesale and Christmas tree growers, retailers and greenhouse operations. Our members have spent generations as stewards of the state’s natural resources. We believe that economic vitality can go hand in hand with sustainability and long-term environmental health. Our top grossing nursery operations reside within the counties of Clackamas, Marion, Washington, Yamhill and Multnomah. While we have statewide reach with the numerous agricultural suppliers, our main nursery operations footprint is from Boring to Medford.

Agriculture is a critical part of the Oregon economy. It represents 15% of the state’s economy, 1 in every 8 jobs, and an Oregon State University study estimates gross farm and ranch sales at \$5.255 billion for 2011, an all-time record.

**Fair and equitable timelines for farm worker pay**

Senate Bill 677 would extend the deadline to write the final paycheck to a migrant farm worker by 12 hours – from midnight of the final workday to noon the next day – in certain instances. OAN understands there is a fine line between delivering a timely paycheck and giving the farmer adequate time to run payroll. This bill does a good job walking that line by extending the timeline only for farmers who offer worker housing and who keep that worker housing open and available to the workers until their last paycheck is issued.

OAN applauds Senator Chuck Thomsen for his work on this bill. He reached out to farm worker advocates and agriculture stakeholders and brought them together to find a solution that every one could feel comfortable with. His thoughtful approach brought together unlikely collaborators to find a solution for farmers that doesn’t unnecessarily burden the farm workers.

The Oregon Association of Nurseries urges your support for Senate Bill 677.