

To whom it may concern:

I am a young farmer. This will be my 4th crop during the 2016 season. As a young farmer I am trying to justify staying with farming as profession. This minimum wage increase makes the decision more easy for me to make. I simply cannot afford to stay in the "game" when labor will take even more in the expense column then it already does. Some may reply that I am not a large enough operation and that is business. I know I am not the only young farmer. How many other young farmers will this wage increase push out? I full heartedly agree that people should be paid a deserving wage but I can't help but feel that law makers and others don't understand that many fruit farms in Oregon give complimentary housing, electricity, water and garbage to their full time employees. I feel farmers cannot take the wage increase and provide these living benefits that these workers have grown accustomed to (and expect to have). We love our employees. We love Oregon. We love being farmers. We hope that others see the importance of keeping family farms. We hope the minimum wage increase will be gradual and spread out over a reasonable amount of time so we have a fighting chance to continue operating a farm business. Is Oregon, a state known for it's agriculture, going to allow our law makers to put family farms at a competitive disadvantage in the domestic and international markets? Thank you for taking time to think about the future of farming here in Oregon.

Lisa Perry