

From: John Burt
To: [LRO](#)
Subject: SB 1-AWHOTC testimony
Date: Wednesday, March 08, 2017 7:13:14 AM

Testimony from:
John Burt, Dallas, OR

In regards to:

SB 1- Agricultural Workforce Housing Operations Tax Credit (AWHOTC)
Senate Finance & Revenue Committee Hearing on March 9, 2017 , 8:30am, HR A

My name is John Burt, Dallas, OR and I am the Executive Director of Farmers Ending Hunger. I also serve as board chair of Community and Shelter Assistance Corp. (CASA) of Oregon. CASA is a statewide supporter of this bill and I am adding my personal support as well. SB 1 will make available new tax credits based on operational expenses for eligible owners of farm worker housing. There is a serious gap between the amount of available farm worker housing and the demand based on known numbers of farm workers in Oregon. The need for more housing is great.

The high value agriculture that is a mainstay of the agricultural economy in Oregon is dependent on a stable and available farm worker population. Housing is one of the key components in a farmer's ability to attract and maintain a supply of workers. In my 33 years as an Oregon State University Extension Agent in the Willamette Valley I have seen first hand how important a stable workforce is for a successful farming operation. I have also seen how those farmers who could offer safe, decent and affordable housing had a distinct advantage in recruiting workers.

SB 1 will add another tool for farmers who want to preserve and improve their housing. It will also provide an incentive for farmers to provide new housing for their workers.

In the changing climate of immigration reform it will be more important than ever for our Oregon farmers to have all the tools possible at their disposal to provide housing. The critical agricultural work force deserves decent and affordable housing. I urge passage of this important bill.