

My name is Erin Hansell-Heideman and I am a wheat farmer in both Morrow and Gilliam counties. I strongly oppose the numerous taxes on working Oregonians proposed in the -1 amendment to HB 2674.

Rural families, like mine, have been hit very hard by the state's response to COVID-19, devastating 2020 wildfires, and 2021 ice storms. The concept of HB 2674 is tone deaf to the needs of my farm, and many like mine. The COVID-19 pandemic caused market disruptions which had major cash flow impacts on me as a farmer. And as with other sectors, many agricultural operations are currently at their breaking point. The -1 amendment taxes our tires, farm equipment, and our off-road fuel, and it will really harm those of us in agriculture who are price takers, not setters. We are continually asked to do more with less and less with the addition of tax burdens to off-set someone else.

At its core, the -1 amendment taxes rural Oregonians to pay for problems in the most urban areas of Oregon. It's fundamentally unfair to saddle my family farm with the cost of retrofitting Portland's fleets or cleaning up Portland's air shed.

I also oppose the proposed tax on tires and off-road equipment. These are an incredible overreach. It is wrong to redistribute money by taxing a farmer and giving it to a construction company, for an example, to purchase an updated piece of equipment. Most of these older, off-road, motors on a farm are used minimally during the year but serve a very specific purpose. To tax a piece of equipment that doesn't go on a public road is ridiculous. If you want to tax off-road equipment, be fair and equitable and consider all lawn mowers as well, another piece of equipment that serves a very specific purpose as certain times of the year.

The proposed fuel tax on red dyed diesel is something I strongly oppose as well. The reason off-road fuel isn't taxed is because it's being used in equipment that does not go on public roadways! The cost of fuel is already increasing with the policies being implemented by the new administration and this bill intends to add an additional cost on an already inflated price that is used on equipment operated on private ground; not public road-ways.

I know that the year-long Diesel Task Force considered many of these taxes and chose not to proceed. I respectfully ask the Committee to do the same. Decisions and bills, like this, are prohibiting the next generation of young people from returning to the family farm. If you intend the next generation to continue feeding a growing nation, than more thoughtful consideration needs to be given to the impacts of nonchalant concepts like this.

All I ask this session is that our legislators focus on resolving the issues in front of them—COVID-19 response, wildfire recovery, and support rebuilding after the devastating February ice storms. Please stop making it harder for family farms, like mine, to survive and focus on real and meaningful relief for our state.

I ask you to vote 'NO' on the -1 amendment to HB 2674.

Respectfully Submitted,

Erin Hansell-Heideman  
Morrow and Gilliam Co. Wheat Farmer  
President of the Morrow County Wheat Growers  
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