

I recognize the spirit of this bill is to protect the health and welfare of agricultural employees. That being said it is misguided and misses the mark.

I am a pear grower in the Hood River Valley, and my situation is shared among many of my fellow growers.

Our employees are very well compensated for their time - most earning in excess of 15\$/hr for basic general labor. Senior employees only go up from there. On commission based jobs that figure is much higher.

Most of us provide FREE FULL HOUSING for workers and their families. This includes construction and interest expenses, water, gas, electricity, garbage, internet, mortgage and associated interest, maintenance and repair, rent, etc. Many are provided work vehicles that we maintain and provide gas for. We administer retirement plans. Larger growers utilize H2a labor which entails a myriad of red tape, regulations, and additional expense.

My employees are also my friends and neighbors, and I am genuinely involved in their work and social lives. The relationship goes beyond a typical boss/employee relationship.

Most in the ag community that I have spoken to feel like we are subjected to ever increasing attacks from one legislative action after another. The last several years have been incredibly challenging financially - and I don't know if you realize that growers will simply be forced to cut employees, mechanize and cut them out, or quit all together. We cannot raise the price of our product to offset costs. Without PPP and CFAP assistance last season my business could have very well failed.

We work outdoors and our commodities do not subscribe to a 40hr work week. Spring and Summer are busy times, Fall and Winter, less so.

I am happy to discuss this with any legislator one on one, please don't make decisions without the facts. It will cost us all, one way or another.

Best Regards,

Paul Lavoie
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