

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is being submitted because as an agricultural business (and a fifth generation of our family farm), we are opposed to the removal of the agriculture overtime exemption proposed in HB 2358 and SB 616. Our farm is located in the heart of the Willamette Valley, in District 5. Our farm is unique in that we not only grow food for our local canneries, but we also have a wholesale nursery. Unlike other businesses, when harvest season comes, we have to conduct business all day and sometimes into the evenings to get our work completed. We are at the mercy of the canneries schedules, when trucks might be available, and often Mother Nature throws things at us that keep us from being able to harvest Monday through Friday for only eight hours. In order to be in business, we must work longer hours to get our work completed. Agriculture products are perishable; they are not widgets sitting on a shelf in a box waiting for the doors to open at 8:00.

To pass these bills, you will devastate the agricultural industry. Take away your farms and Ag businesses, and you have lost a huge source of revenue that our state receives from the products we grow. Ag is the number one/two industry, why would you want to destroy it? You think you are helping the employees...take a look at California. Several agricultural business had to cut their employees hours because of the overtime rules. Some of those businesses closed (especially the small farms). The employees liked those seasonally long hours, and when they were cut, they ended up getting a second job at a McDonald's (or such) to make up for those lost hours. Taking that extra part-time job meant taking a job that could have been given to someone else. This does not help anyone. The employee knows those longer hours during the season aren't forever and they actually like them. They take pride in their work watching that small seed turn into several ears of corn or bushes full of beans. Protect the Ag workers by saving their jobs!

Oregon has one of the highest minimum wages in the US. Our competition with other states is already tough as they may be paying the federal minimum wage of 7.25, meaning our expenses are already double theirs. Many of our crop prices are set by those we grow for. We do not get to pass along our additional expenses as non-ag businesses do. Many of our expenses, which are not under our control, continue to increase every year making operating a business more difficult. Running a business is not easy, and Oregon does not feel business friendly anymore. More taxes, fees, and government oversight are pushing people and businesses **out of our state or out of business.**

As a family business, our sons wonder if they will be the last to continue the business. They have children too, and don't feel confident to groom them for the farm that may not be around for them. Is this what your bills are trying to achieve? Remember where we come from, and let the farms stay in business by opposing these bills. If you pass them, it could be the beginning of the end.