

My family operates a wheat and cattle farm in Eastern Oregon, and I would like to offer my testimony against HB 2358. Our farm provides employment to several people both year-round and seasonally, and this bill would be extremely difficult for us financially. We have three full time, year-round employees, including myself. We also hire seasonally for irrigation and wheat harvest. In looking at our 2020 payroll hours, mandatory overtime would have cost our business well over \$11,000. We operate on extremely thin margins, and this expense would not be affordable. I can only imagine the impact this bill would have on farmers who grow more labor-intensive crops like cherries – it would be devastating. Our employees know that farming requires unique hours and that seasonally, longer days are necessary during harvest and calving seasons. Weather also dictates that some work weeks be longer than others, to take advantage of ideal conditions for field work. Our farm and many others provide excellent benefits in order to care for full time employees including health insurance, housing, utilities, and paid sick and vacation time. I honestly don't know how farms could absorb the cost of mandatory overtime. None of the options are good: Reduce fringe benefits in order to pay for the overtime? Reduce hours to 40 maximum per week so employees have smaller paychecks? Decrease the time we spend raising our crops properly and harvesting them in a timely manner which will decrease our yields, thus threatening both the viability of our farms and the security of our food supply? Continue the trend toward large corporate farms that can absorb such costs and drive the small family farms out of business? Please consider the negative far-reaching consequences of this bill and vote NO on HB 2358.

Sincerely,
Amy Kaser, Democrat
Wheat and Cattle Farmer
The Dalles, OR