

To whom it may concern,

My name is Nick Gomeza and I operate a family row crop farm in Eastern Oregon. NJ Gomeza Farms was established in 2005 and currently employs 10-25 farm workers. Labor needs change at various points throughout the growing season. At peak points our crew is larger and work more hours to complete certain tasks such as: planting, irrigation assemblies, cultivating, harvest, etc. These mentioned tasks cannot be carried out in a forty hour work week and are imperative to the viability of my operation and jobs of our valued employees. Oregon minimum wage is at an all time high and I recognize the importance of our employees and their efforts so it has never been a standard of my company to pay Oregon Minimum. With this been said our employees earn a nice income based off of the hours worked on the farm. With the passage of HB 2358 this would likely change for our employees. I understand this seems counter intuitive, but ag operations would be forced to make changes to accommodate the newly proposed spike in labor costs. To make mention of some of the changes I foresee unfortunately farms would have to: automate, mechanize, utilize larger equipment, reduce hours worked by employees, pay minimum wage, and develop 8 hour rotating shifts to avoid overtime pay. This is not a game of cat and mouse for farmers to dodge overtime pay to pad personal pockets, IT SIMPLY IS NOT FEASIBLE! Ag producers do not have the luxury to manipulate markets to be more profitable. Margins are slim and it is a constant challenge we face to put food on the table for our fellow Oregonians and Americans. HB 2358 will inadvertently do the opposite of what it is intended to do for farm workers. I am proud to be an Oregonian, farmer, and fortunate to provide jobs to those who need them. I cordially ask that HB 2358 be rejected as it is bad for Oregon farms and ranches, farm workers, the economy, and our great state in general!

Respectfully,

Nick Gomeza
NJ Gomeza Farms