



March 9, 2021

Dear Chair Holvey, Vice-Chairs Bonham and Grayber:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 481 related to agriculture overtime. Beef Northwest Feeders, LLC is a family-owned business located in North Powder, Oregon with other Oregon based operations in Union, Wallowa, Malheur, Umatilla, and Morrow Counties. What began in the 1870s as the Wilson Cattle Company, Beef Northwest developed into a people-focused company where together we care for cattle and produce healthy beef for consumers in a responsible, sustainable way.

In that same ethic, our employees are our greatest asset. Our like-minded team has a love for agriculture, progressive animal husbandry and hard work. From administrative positions, to pen riders, to feed callers and everyone in between, our commitment to our employees is unmatched in the industry. Most of our employees are members of the United Farm Workers union. For our employees, that means high paying family wage jobs with benefits. For us, that means a happy, health workforce that helps keep our local communities strong.

From a company specific level, Beef Northwest Feeders offers a competitive and comprehensive employee benefit package, including Health and Vision Insurance, Life Insurance, 401K and generous leave. We also pay time-and-a-half on holidays and we are able to provide flexibility in work schedules to those that need it. At the same time, we offer opportunities for employees to work the hours they desire if they wish to earn extra for themselves and their families.

While we pay competitive wages and benefits in our region, we do not pay overtime. Changes to Oregon's overtime laws would impact our operation and our ability to offer additional hours for workers that want extra pay. Because we are in a global market, we are competing with cattle feeders from across the country and the world. In order to remain competitive in Oregon, we must be able to raise beef at a competitive price. That said, we welcome a conversation with the Committee about how to best create an overtime policy that will truly benefit employees and the long-term viability of Oregon's family farmers and ranchers.

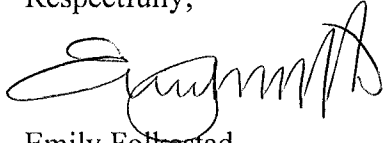
In short, like other Oregon family farmers and ranchers, we care deeply about being good stewards of the environment, ethical treatment of animals and strong commitment to workers and our local communities. We believe agriculture overtime policy, if done properly, can both help employees without hurting employers. With that in mind, there have been no formal conversations amongst stakeholders on this policy and this bill has not been vetted. We support

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starting a conversation on this policy and ask the Committee to convene a group of diverse stakeholders to craft a policy that reflects the needs of ag workers and family farmers and ranchers. In the meantime, we ask that you oppose HB 481 as proposed.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Emily Folkestad". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "E" and "F".

Emily Folkestad
Chief Financial Officer
Beef Northwest Feeders, LLC