

SCOTT HARVESTING, LLC
Stanfield, OR

March 26, 2021

To Whom it May Concern:

My name is Craig Scott and I farm in Umatilla county. I grow/raise cattle and harvest Alfalfa, Triticale and Corn. We employ as many as 12 employees during harvest, many of whom come back to my farm year after year. I want to share with you my concerns about the real impact of HB 2358 on both my farm and my employees, which is scheduled for a public hearing in the House Business and Labor Committee on March 29th.

HB 2358 would require every farm and ranch in Oregon to pay overtime to employees after 40 hours of work, with no exceptions or consideration of peak season. This is the most aggressive overtime policy in the country, which would be devastating for local farmers and our employees.

Agriculture is experiencing a serious workforce shortage, and I already do a lot to compensate my employees for their hard work. For example, we pay for an accident policy and during harvest we provide meals. We also allow employees to take paid time off in exchange of overtime hours reducing their need to go on unemployment or seek other employment.

As you may know harvesting crops is time sensitive meaning harvesting at the correct time is imperative to get the highest quality from the crop and to get the highest return on investment of money and time. Many factors beyond our control regulate the timing of harvest and the pressure to harvest quickly. Unfortunately, we have no control over the weather or equipment breakdown and many times we must work longer than expected due to rain, lack of, wind or equipment repairs.

I want to do everything I can to keep my employees happy and coming back to my farm, but as a family business we struggle every year to earn a profit. My wife, son and I work well over 70 hours a week and earn well under minimum wage as it is to keep our cost of labor down. That is the economic reality I deal with every day.

I will not be able to afford the added payroll costs proposed in HB 2358, as it will likely cost me an additional \$100,000 in new labor costs. To stay in business, I will be forced to limit the number of hours worked by my employees

to 40 hours in a week to avoid the added expense of overtime pay. I do not want to do this, and my employees do not want me to do this, but that is the practical reality of this bill.

We will have a higher turnover rate which will increase our training cost as well.

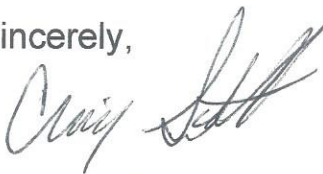
Our options are:

We will have to mechanize operations even more, or even move outside of Oregon to stay in business. Farm employees are at risk of losing their jobs if downsizing, or mechanizing are the only options available to a farm or ranch. If this bill passes. As a family business, we cannot operate at a loss year-over-year, so we must control costs that seem to increase every year in Oregon. I know it is not the goal of this bill to reduce employee take-home pay, but HB 2358 demands wages that are not possible with the economics of agriculture for smaller family-owned farming operations and will result in larger corporate farms taking over more and more family farms, running bigger equipment and reducing the labor force even more.

I am genuinely concerned that this policy has not been well-vetted and will actually harm those it intends to help. Those who want this bill have not even done an analysis of how much this will cost!

Please oppose HB 2358 this session. This bill will negatively impact not only family farmers and ranchers in Oregon, but also agricultural workers!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Craig Scott". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Craig Scott