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March 27, 2021

Chair Holvey, Vice-Chair Bonham, Vice-Chair Grayber and members of the committee.

My name is Pete Brentano. I am a 5<sup>th</sup> generation farmer in St. Paul Oregon. My mother, my three brothers and I operate a diversified agricultural operation on about 2000 acres. We raise green beans, garlic, hazelnuts, nursery stock, grass seed, sweet corn and various other crops. We employ 30 people in year round positions and additional people through the various planting and harvest seasons.

I want to share with you my concerns about HB 2358 and the real impacts it will have on our business and our employees. Agriculture is exempt from overtime pay in the federal Fair Labor Standards Act for two main reasons, in agriculture we are at the whims of the markets and the weather.

Agricultural product markets are for the most part national or global. As such our consumers have choices on where to spend their dollars and price is the determining factor. Because of this we end up being 'price takers'. We have to sell to a market where the price is already established and that market does not care what our cost of production is. These market forces often leave us with very small margins. Additional costs to Oregon producers that are not the same for other producers in other states are damaging to Oregon farmers and ranchers.

And then there is the weather. Like myself as I was growing up, my children knew that they were to be silent when the weather was on the TV. Weather effects our operation every day and we are forced to respond to it. When we get breaks in the spring we have to plant our crops often working well into the night to get those crop in before the next rain arrives. When we experience heat in the summer we often have to get extra water to our crops and are changing water at all hours of the day. And when it is harvest time the crops don't wait for us. They must be harvested when they are just right. Too early and you lose yield, too late and they are overmature and the market won't accept them or will severely dock your price. And a glaring example is last month's ice storm. Our operation lost hundreds of thousands of dollars in orchard and nursery production but we also have had to put thousands of hours into removing and repairing our trees. These are hours that we couldn't have had extra employees standing by to be ready for. Instead we had to devote longer days and more days with our existing employees to get the work done.

I operate a business and I will do what it takes for my business to survive by controlling my costs. I will adapt my crops, my operations and my practices to do so. The real cost of this bill would come to my employees. We do our best to compensate them for their hard work and we understand that they depend on getting hours to support their families. Because my business cannot afford to absorb overtime pay I would be forced to keep their hours to the 40 allowed. This would reduce their take home pay by 20% or more in most cases.

Please oppose HB 2358. This bill would negatively impact Oregon businesses and the workers that depend on them!

Pete Brentano  
Brentano's Tree Farm