

March 29, 2021



To: Oregon State legislature  
House Committee on Business and Labor

From: Randy Nelson  
Everde Growers

RE: House Bill 2358 – Agricultural Overtime - Please Oppose

Everde Growers is a wholesale nursery in Forest Grove, Oregon. This location has been an agricultural employer operating under various ownership structures for over 40 years. We are a year-round employer and we currently employ 100 workers, many of whom have 30+ years working on the site.

This bill would require every farm and ranch in Oregon to pay overtime to employees after 40 hours of work. Currently, agriculture is exempt from overtime pay under the federal Fair Labor Standards Act and in most other states. These bills propose one of the most aggressive overtime policies in the country, which would be devastating for local farmers and our employees.

With passage, our business will be forced to limit the number of hours worked by employees to 40 hours in a week to avoid the added expense of overtime pay. We do not want to do this, and my employees do not want us to do this, but that is the practical reality of these bills. Our workers rely on the hours that we have long provided. It is understood that it's not the goal of these bills to reduce employee take-home pay, but HB 2358 demand wages that are not possible with the economics of agriculture and will result in reduced pay and hours for farm employees. We are very concerned that this policy hasn't been well-vetted and will actually harm those it intends to help.

This will force us to mechanize operations, transition to less labor-intensive crops, or even potentially close our Oregon operation. Farm employees are at risk of losing their jobs if downsizing, switching crops, or mechanizing are the only options available. If this bill passes, we will need to downsize and change our crop varieties which would result in lost business opportunities and customer base. In an already difficult labor market we will be forced to try to hire additional staff to spread out the work. Inexperienced employees cost us in inefficiencies and puts us at risk for increased injured workers or accidents.

These bills would negatively impact not only farmers and ranchers in Oregon, but also agricultural workers! We have all had a difficult past 13 months with COVID-19. Now is not the time rush policy that will affect so many hard-working people.

Please oppose HB 2358 this session.

Best Regards,

Randy Nelson  
General Manager  
Everde Growers – 45296 SW Ritchey Road, Forest Grove, OR 97116