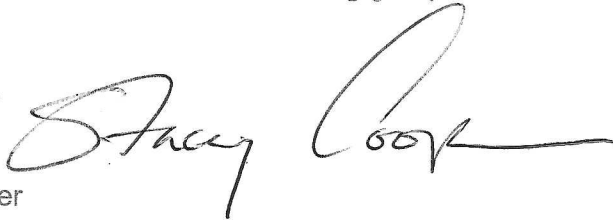


One of the committee members talked about Safety. My worry is safety also. Employees held to 40 hours at one job will seek out a second job to supplement their income. So now working a night shift means less sleep and more chances of injury happening. I am confused how overtime actually reduces the safety issue.

The biggest change I have seen in the last 22 years is the consolidation. Small family farms are being leased or sold out to larger operations. The added expense and stress of the bill HB2358 will continue to drive small family farms out of business.

Committee members, I believe that the bill came from a very well intended idea. Unfortunately the reality is it will do both harm to employers and employees. Please oppose Bill 2358 or at least postpone it and put it into a working group.

Respectively,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stacey Cooper". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "S" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Stacey Cooper

Cooper Family Orchards

2270 Dry Hollow Rd
The Dalles, OR 97058
(541)288-6773
coopercherryorchards@gmail.com

March 9, 2021

To the Committee Members of HB 2358,

My name is Stacey Cooper and I help run our family farm that has just celebrated 150 years of farming in the state of Oregon. I am opposed to the HB 2358 bill that would take away the exemption of overtime pay for agriculture workers. This bill feels like so many things in the last year that have been rushed. In this time of uncertainty for Industry and employees we need to take a step back and look at what is good for the whole.

I returned to the family farm in 1999 and over the last 22 years I have seen many changes in our Industry. But the one thing that has really not changed is the price of our crop. The average return for our cherries have been around .80 cents a pound for the last 22 years. In fact in 2009 when there was an oversupply of cherries we received bills from our warehouse. The employees were still paid. For many of the family farms that Bill HB2358 will affect there is no way to recover this additional cost. We have continually had to find ways to become more efficient and cut back to stay in business.

The Financial consequence to the bill HB2358 will be less take-home pay for the employees. Ours will be to reduce to 40 hours when possible and seasonal workers will definitely be held to a 40 hour work week. Harvest wages which is an increased pay for our year-round employees will be become a thing of the past. We will have to hire more seasonal employees, that work piece rate which means more people less money for each person. Over the last 22 years we have worked to reduce the amount of people that come and live and work on our farm. Not only for the efficacy for the farm but also to maximize the work for the people who do come. Many of these families that I have grown up with over the last 50 years.