

Chair Holvey and members of the committee~

I am writing today in opposition of HB2358.

Please except my written testimony as I cannot wait on a committee meeting for up to four hours with a chance of not even being able to speak, or have my testimony limited to a brief minute. HB2358 would enact the most aggressive policy in the country, requiring farmers in Oregon to pay overtime to employees who work over 40 hours per week. Agriculture is currently exempt from overtime pay under the federal FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT, due to the unique seasonal nature of its production. Employees often work long hours during peak season while working minimal to no hours the rest of the year. This has always allowed the employee to work hard for the season and save for down time. Allowing students to go to school, giving ample family time, or allowing an employee to work another job.

This bill would make Oregon farmers have to decide if they want to pay overtime to 2 employees, higher a 3rd if they can find the help, come to the realization that investing in automation for their production has the ability to save them money and the reliance on labor, decide to downsize or to stop farming altogether. The impact would not only be felt by the farmers, but by all of Oregon's economy. Employees will lose their jobs, there will be a reduction in equipment and supply purchases. Which equates to less jobs for other sectors related to farming, including construction and financial services.

Farming accounts for 15% of Oregon's economy (\$28.9 billion). Approximately 140,000 jobs are tied to the farming industry; with only about 60,000 of them being on the farm. Other jobs are in marketing, transportation, warehousing/storage, financing and other related services. Approximately 80% of Oregon agriculture production goes out of state; 40% goes out of country. With reduction in Oregon farming this will not only be felt locally but world wide. Oregon's farmers grow more than 250 commodities, with each grower producing enough to feed 130 people. The impact of this legislation has not been fully considered.

Oregon Farmers already struggle with neighboring states having lower price points, and large amounts of money tied up in equipment, labor, and supplies. Their love and passion for the land, animals and crops means more to them than the slim to negative profit, long hours and mounting heartache. For Oregon's generational farmers this is a way of life, and doesn't fit into a "9 to 5 schedule."

For all these reasons and those stated by others please help preserve Oregon farms and vote no on HB2358

John and Debbie Hafner & Family