

Submitter: Chad Kernutt
On Behalf Of: Tax paying Oregonians and US citizens
Committee: House Committee On Business and Labor
Measure: HB4002

Dear Legislators,

I write to you today as an employed tax paying U.S. citizen and an Oregonian, a married father of 3, a veteran who has fought for this country and your ability to be sitting in your chair a free person (maybe not so much the last 2 years) thinking about taking more of my hard earned money from my family. This is not okay with me and most Oregonians. Every time a sales tax and hidden taxes are put on the ballot WE THE PEOPLE vote it down overwhelmingly. We do not want taxes or hidden taxes in this state which is exactly what HB-4002 is as it will severely raise fuel and agricultural product costs for us Oregonians. I urge you to vote NO on HB-4002 and stop this foolishness and constant reach for more of our hard earned money.

This bill prohibits employers from permitting or requiring agricultural workers to work in excess of maximum allowable hours unless workers are compensated for overtime hours worked. Creates income or corporate excise tax credit to employer for excess amount of wages paid as overtime pay to agricultural workers.

Let individuals negotiate their hours without government interference. Big government needs to let free market work. Over protecting immigrants that come to work the fields can sign their own agreement to work longer hours in peak harvest because when the harvest is done, there is no work.

Mandating agriculture overtime was introduced in the 2021 session, and was one of many threats against agriculture and the stakes are even higher with a lawsuit trying to bypass the Legislative process and force overtime mandates through Bureau of Labor and Industry (BOLI). This is a complex issue, made even more challenging by the staggering diversity in Oregon Agriculture (225 different commodities grown!). No two farms are the same, and neither are their staffing requirements—making a one-size-fits-all approach to overtime devastating for most Oregon's farms.

Agriculture is seasonal and dependent on weather windows and limited by the perishability of produce. When fruit is ripe, the job doesn't get done in a typical 9-5 day. Farms can't pass along added labor costs. Unlike most industries, produce prices get set by the commodity market, and prices can't be raised just because our costs go up. Other states' mandates led to capped hours and lower paychecks. Farms are forced to invest in mechanization and cap employees' hours to reduce labor costs. Farms will be forced to reduce benefits to offset labor cost increases. Most farms provide benefits beyond an hourly wage, but those incentives are not

being considered. 95% of Oregon farms are family-owned businesses. Smaller farms are the least able to absorb added labor costs.

I urge you to please vote NO on HB-4002, we don't want the government taking more money out of our pockets and from our families by skyrocketing costs on all fuels as well as all products coming from the agricultural sector. Thank you

Sincerely,
Chad Kernutt
Albany, Oregon
IN GOD WE TRUST (not politicians)