

Submitter: Don Ekstrom

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Business and Labor

Measure: HB4002

I farm in Multnomah County. I raise nursery stock and employ approx 30 employees year around. Plus many seasonal employees come back to my farm year after year. I am concerned about the impact that ag overtime would have on my farm and employees. I do everything I can to compensate employees fairly. Our product can not absorb additional increases and maintain sales. The added costs will have to be absorbed by my family's farm. We will not be able to sustain a business that is not profitable. That's the economic reality for those of us in agriculture.

Oregon's specialty crops are labor intensive and have peak seasonal needs, including harvesting, pruning, and planting. This bill does not take into consideration the financial incentives of employees doing piece work. To remain in business, I will be forced to limit the number of hours that employees work to 40 hours per week, mechanize or transition to less labor-intensive crops to avoid the added expense of overtime pay. I do not want to do this, but that is the practical reality.

Farmers have been clear about the consequences of this policy, but I'm also worried that farm employees will see their paychecks reduced or jobs cut if overtime pay is required after 40-hours. The other unintended consequences for employees will be looking for alternative ways to increase their income on the weekend.