

February 8, 2022

HB 4002 Ag overtime bill

Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the overtime bill. I am a partner in a small nursery in Canby, which employs approximately 10 people full-time and up to 16 people seasonally. We normally try to keep the work hours at 44 hours or less during Fall and Winter and up to 50 hours/week during Spring and Summer. There are very few times we need to work more than this and no one is required to work any additional hours.

Our nursery ships over 90% of our product out of Oregon and must compete with growers across the country who have less expensive inputs and are much closer to the ultimate consumer. Oregon has a huge advantage in growing plants, due to its climate, resources and skilled labor, however this advantage is slipping away quickly due to added regulations, high wages and costs.

I am very dedicated to our employees, who many have been with our company for over 25 years. Their well-being is important to me personally and to my business. If the overtime bill passes close to 40 hours, there will be some unintended consequences that will not benefit the employee or employer. Our nursery will be forced to reduce the work week to 40 hours or whatever the limit is. We simply cannot justify the added cost to our product and pass it off to the buyer. Most likely we will invest in mechanization and bringing in part time contract labor to fill in the void. The result is our small business will suffer and more importantly our employees will suffer. They will be earning approximately \$600 less per month in the Spring and Summer months. This is significant amount of money and can be the difference between paying for rent and food. This is not what I want to see, nor do I believe it is what the bill is intended to achieve.

Another unintended consequence is it will hurt smaller agriculture more than big Ag. Larger companies have more resources to find employees and invest in labor saving equipment. The smaller companies will be less competitive and may lose business and close their doors leaving the largest companies to reap the loss of competition.

I applaud your concern for agricultural labor and believe we should be focused on making sure they are protected from bad actors. This bill does not do this. It ultimately hurts the people we all want to help.

If an agricultural overtime bill is passed, I encourage you to set the limits at a high enough level so that the business and more so the employees will not be needlessly hurt. Please contact me if you have any questions. 503-572-4667

Thank you

Jerome Simnitt Jr.

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