



1616 P Street, NW
Suite 300
Washington, DC 20036
T +202.683.2500
F +202.683.2501
foodandwaterwatch.org

TO: House Business and Labor Committee

FR: Mackenzie Aime, Food & Water Watch

RE: In Support of House Bill 4002 (Farmworker Overtime)

Please use this testimony as Food & Water Watch's official position on farmworker overtime. Disregard testimony submitted on 2/7/22.

February 8, 2022

My name is Mackenzie Aime, and I am an Oregon Organizer for Food & Water Watch. Food & Water Watch fights for solutions to the most pressing food, water, and climate problems of our time. We work to protect people's health, communities, and democracy from the growing destructive power of the most powerful economic interests.

On behalf of Food & Water Watch and our 39,000 members and supporters in Oregon, we are writing in support of passing farmworker overtime in Oregon.

Implementing farmworker overtime is a much-needed update to Oregon's existing labor law. Overtime benefits have been available to workers in most industries since the passage of the Federal Labor Standards Act of 1938. However, agricultural workers as a class have historically been excluded from overtime laws.

This stems, in large part, from our nation's long history of racial discrimination. Agricultural workers have predominantly been people of color and immigrants. Lower standards of pay were, and continue to be, a method of social and economic control over people from these communities.

Passing farmworker overtime is a long overdue step towards rectifying this injustice, by guaranteeing time and a half to agricultural workers for work in excess of 40 hours in a workweek - a standard practice in other industries. Farmworkers overtime should also cover those who are paid by piece-rate as well as hourly employees, in order to account for the different systems of compensation in the agriculture industry.

It is crucial that the legislature act to fairly compensate the labor of these workers. Because agricultural work must be done in a certain place and at a certain time (harvest season), these workers must often work long hours in extreme conditions and risk adverse health effects from their labor. Wildfires and recent heat waves happen most often during peak harvesting season, often forcing workers to jeopardize their health to put food on their - and our - families' tables.

These workers are fundamental to the operation of our food system. We rely on them for the food we eat. They deserve dignity and respect, and that means guaranteeing them the same overtime pay that other workers receive.



I urge you to vote yes on HB 4002 and ultimately pass farmworker overtime in the 2022 legislative session to ensure farmworkers in Oregon are adequately paid for their labor, as soon as possible.

Sincerely,
Mackenzie Aime
Oregon Organizer
Food & Water Watch