

Submitter: Matthew Lisignoli

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Business and Labor

Measure: HB4002

As a first generation, and apparently last generation farmer, HB 4002 could be the straw that broke the farmers back. Virtually all legislation from Salem has a negative impact on agriculture. Regulations, restrictions or eliminating pesticides, water, diesel and raising livestock, as examples, are and will ultimately destroy agriculture in this state. Labor is already one of the greatest challenges to agriculture, and now you desire to burden us further while we attempt to feed the 98 percent of the population which doesn't own or operate a farm.

We all make career choices. 35 years ago I began farming because I respected the profession and the people involved in agriculture. This is how I planned to raise and educate my children. The commitment of time and resources was overwhelming and I endured endless days and unbearable conditions in a desperate effort to support my family. My children helped and saw the devastating odds stacked against farming and all decided to follow another path. This is disappointing, but I applaud their decision to escape the untenable regulations imposed by your legislation. The objective of Oregon's legislature appears to delete agricultural from this state. Congratulations! Today, Farmers I visit with are retiring early and moving out of Oregon. Good news to you but I am curious who will maintain the land, fund the government and stock the grocery store shelves while keeping Oregon beautiful.

I CHOSE agriculture, you CHOSE to legislate, teachers CHOOSE to teach and workers CHOOSE if they want to work in agriculture or another industry which offers overtime compensation. Now to focus on HB 4002 and not legislatures ineptitude for business and especially agriculture, everyone can decide their interests and select jobs within their abilities, and your legislation will take that away. I have workers which left a 40 hour per week jobs in town to work on a farm because they desire the additional hours to earn more income. Agriculture is a low margin industry with internationally competitive markets. If I need to explain this further you shouldn't be making any decisions regarding HB 4002. We don't necessarily avoid paying overtime because of greed, there simply isn't enough profit unless everyone that eats is willing to pay more.

This legislation will have a negative effect on the farm workers I would assume you are attempting to help. Employers will limit workers hours to the maximum before triggering overtime. In an attempt to manage their expenses, farmers will hire extra people to work the additional hours. Any question why less that 2% of the population are farmers?

A 2020 USDA report stated the median household income of a farmer at \$80,000/year. At the current minimum wage, a full time farm employee working 6 days a week can make almost half as much as the business owner without the risk and responsibility of operating the farm. You should allow farm business owners to make a profit and be successful for the benefit of their employees and everyone else that benefits from Oregon's farmers.

We all have choices, however government, and especially in Oregon, believes they must regulate and tax everything that moves or earns a buck, while removing any opportunity for individuals to make their own decisions. Do as you will, and consider my voice the voice of a hundred other farmers that are either unaware or too busy to spend the time responding to this legislation with the very argument I presented. We don't have to farm in this state or anywhere, but you will be sorely disappointed when you attempt to replace our efficiency and dedication once we have moved away..