

House Committee on Business and Labor  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

RE: HB 4002- Support for Livestock Exemption in Ag Overtime Legislation

Chair Holvey and Members of the Committee,

My name is Cheryl Martin. I am a cattle rancher in Northeastern Oregon and am the chair of the Oregon Cattlemen's Association's Legislative Committee. I am sending written testimony to emphasize the importance of including a livestock/Ag exemption to HB 4002.

As I am out checking cattle every 3 hours who are calving and I can see the neighbor's spotlights doing the same thing, it is clear to see that the practicality of a set work week and set work hours are not feasible to raising livestock. As the sun sets on a day of gathering cattle off the range and we close the final gate for the day, it is clear to see that the practicality of a set work week and set work hours is not feasible to raising livestock. Cattle cannot be left in a dry corral until a new work day begins. Cattle cannot be expected to calve without issues on a frigid, below zero night without supervision and care. We are dealing with large animals on large areas of land and situations are not always predictable. A day cannot end if the job is not done.

While our cattle ranching lifestyle can be and is very rewarding, it is also full of challenges and risks that many times are beyond our control. Our costs of doing business is increasing exponentially. We deal with market price fluctuations, constantly changing regulations and mandates, limited financial resources, labor shortages, natural disasters, and a barrage of misinformation about our product and our industry. We invest huge amounts of time and money to stay viable and yet we are not able to set prices for our products. The cattle industry is unique and essential to Oregon's economy and to the food chain around the world.

Every policy decision that comes from our great state Capitol has the potential of impacting the sustainability of cattle ranching in Oregon.

I plead with my elected officials to become informed and seek thoughtful input from cattle producers to include an ag exemption in HB 4002. A policy decision concerning overtime wages for agricultural workers will have dramatic economic consequences to our industry. If ag businesses cannot afford to stay viable, it will remove many job opportunities that now exist. If ag businesses cannot afford to stay viable, it will have dire consequences for our communities. If ag businesses cannot afford to stay viable, a whole sector of our generational family dynamics will no longer exist.

I thank you for your time.

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