

February 8, 2020

Members of the House Committee on Business and Labor,

I am the International Accounts Manager at BOSSCO Trading LLC in Linn County. We export grass straw, baled after grass is harvested for seed. I want to share with you my concerns about the impact of an ag overtime mandate on our operation and overall competitiveness in the international markets.

Our operations rely on farmworkers to safely harvest for seed and then baling crews to harvest the straw afterwards. Grass straw harvest is only 4-6 weeks in length, and it must be done timely in order to allow farmers the ability to start working their ground for the next crop. Rain, heavy winds, and hot weather can be damaging to both seed harvest and straw harvest, so in times of harsh weather conditions, harvest crews work ahead of the weather to provide consumers with the best product.

At a 40-hour overtime threshold, workers risk losing shifts, total hours, and take-home pay. In addition, the new labor costs might cause trade-offs for current benefits like insurance and housing. With increasing labor costs, many producers simply may not be able to continue providing these additional benefits to their workers. Agricultural overtime could have dire consequences for the families who depend on ranches and dairies for their income.

There is nothing that we produce in agriculture here in the US and here in Oregon that cannot be sourced elsewhere in the world. If we cannot deliver it to our foreign customers dependably and affordably, they will turn to other countries and we will lose our customers. That is true for grass straw and forage. If we cannot meet our customers' demands, they will and they have sought out replacing our American forage with Australian forages instead. Adding to our labor costs will make Oregon grass straw and forage exporters less competitive in the global market.

Please oppose a 40-hour overtime mandate for Oregon agriculture under HB 4002. In our world of international trade challenges, imposing new costs at this difficult time will only strip Oregon's grass straw from the international market. If you have any further questions, I am happy to be of resource.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alexis Jacobson', with a large, stylized flourish extending to the right.

Alexis Jacobson

International Accounts Manager

BOSSCO Trading LLC

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