

Date: 2/9/2022

To: House Committee on Business and Labor

From: Emily Cooper

Re: Support for Farmworker Overtime

Chair Holvey, Vice Chairs Bonham and Grayber, and Members of the House Business and Labor Committee:

My name is Emily Cooper, and I live in Gresham. I am writing on behalf of myself and my farm, Full Cellar Farm, which is in Boring.

I am writing to you today in support of farmworker overtime. Farmworkers should receive overtime pay after 40 hours in a workweek at one and one-half times the employee's regular rate of pay. As a farmer I know this will impact agriculture as a whole in Oregon, but it is our responsibility to move our sector forward.

Many farmers may be coming to you, explaining why our low profit margins require that we continue with the status quo, or risk raising food prices for average Americans. It is true that most farms, including my own, run on a razor thin margin. However, I firmly believe that we must not balance our farms' budgets on the backs of our most critical (and skilled!) workers.

I have been voluntarily paying my employees overtime wages since last year. I am doing this both because it helps me keep them to a 40-hour work week, which is better for them given our strenuous and stressful profession, and because when they do work longer hours in a week, they deserve to be compensated for it like every other American worker.

For too long, farmworkers have been treated differently than other workers, despite the critically important function they serve in feeding our nation. It's time to end this unfair and unequal treatment.

I urge you to pass farmworker overtime in the 2022 Legislative Session to ensure farmworkers in Oregon are paid fairly for their skilled and essential labor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Emily Cooper". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Emily Cooper
Owner/Operator
Full Cellar Farm LLC