

9271 NW McCabe Rd.
Prineville, OR 97754
January 8, 2022

House Committee on Business and Labor
State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Holvey and Committee Members,

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. I am a fourth generation Central Oregon farmer. We have sons that want to continue to farm with us, but with all the increased costs and regulations put on farming and ranching operations in Oregon our family is getting the feeling that we are not wanted in Oregon. Our sons have talked about moving out of Oregon because of the hostile treatment of young families and farmers in general. The CAT tax, new rules being written by DEQ, COVID mandates and even this bill 4002 have caused us to look into other options for our family farm like selling out and moving away from Oregon.

We are starting into our third year of extreme drought, we don't have much control of on farm expenses and farm revenues are dictated by the global markets. With mandated worker overtime pay we will definitely increase our payroll costs and we have no way to recoup this cost.

Oregon is a diverse state and has over 250 different commodities grown. One blanket bill on overtime will hurt a lot of us small farmers. You need to take into consideration the Seasonality of our work, the saying you got to make hay while the sun shines really means something to us. We do put in long hours in the summers but we have shorter days in the winter; but that isn't true of all farmers in Oregon. Dairies and ranchers with livestock on range need to be listened to as they have unique situations that should be taken into account. Also Piece Work needs to be exempt as those workers get paid on what they get accomplished, they come to work when they want to and work as much or as little as they desire it really is a win for both the employer and the employee. Please take the time to listen to farmers and help us, I submit that the majority of farmers and workers are good with what is going on but like with all things a few bad apples shouldn't have to upset everything. Please take time and work on this issue.

Our family has roots in this state and wants to continue to farm here and raise our children to be good contributing citizens. We care about the people we hire and work alongside them, we pay fair wages and we don't leave them to work unprotected in the extreme cold and heat. There maybe a few agricultural employers that abuse workers but they are not the family farmers that I am acquainted with. If HB 4002 is passed without getting a good Oregon Solution like Seasonality of farm work, a Livestock Herdsman exemption and a Piece Work exemption family farms like ours will be gone and the big farms that can absorb these costs will be left.

Please oppose 4002 as it is and work on a real Oregon Solution.

Wade Flegel