

February 24, 2022

My name is Greg Bennett I want to share with you my concerns about the real impacts of HB 4002 on both my farm and my employees.

As a farmer, I am a price taker, which means that I cannot simply increase the sale price of my crops to account for added labor costs. Supply as well as consumers demand set our prices. Other countries such as India and China produce the same crop without the high cost of labor overtime. This will allow the other markets to sell cheaper than the United States thus forcing us out of the market. If this bill passes it is another price we farmers must pay not only to feed our own families but my workers families as well. How many more costs can we incur and still continue to deliver quality food for the next generation. Labor is the one cost that does not vary on a day-to-day basis for farmers. We are constantly adapting to fluctuating costs of fuel, chemicals, machine parts and insurance now you are asking us to produce a product with no idea of how much we may or may not profit at the end of all our hard work. Would any of you choose a career where you did not know if and when your bills would get paid?

The passage of HB 4002 will impact my farm and my workers in negative ways; firstly, by growing less and utilizing less acreage for farming. Secondly our bottom line will be negatively impacted meaning less money for Oregon. Thirdly the workers will be affected by loss of yearly income causing trained workers to go elsewhere. There are approximately 37,200 farms and ranches in Oregon that cannot afford to add more risk to an already risky business.

Recently I had a discussion with a worker who has been a valuable employee for many years. I asked him if he know about this bill, he said no. I explained it and he shook his head and said this is not good for me this will cause me to pay more in taxes if you can afford to keep me. I said the truth would be I could not afford to keep you at the price the state would force me to pay you. This is because I pay my employees more than minimum wage. With the passage of this bill I would have to let go of my most valuable employees and hire new employees at a lower rate to compensate for the cost of overtime. How is this helping the workers of this community if they do not even know about this bill?

I want to thank you for considering my talking points, if you had not considered them then this bill would have already passed.

Sincerely,

Greg Bennett.