

February 24, 2022

Testimony to Joint Committee on Farm Worker Overtime – Opposing HB 4002A

Dear Chairs Holvey and Taylor and members of the Committee:

My name is Cameron Kerns, I ranch in Baker & Union Counties, with my father & grandparents. My operation has been in our county since 1967 and is a significant economic generator by way of employment. The wages I pay to our employees are reinvested in this local economy.

Thank you for receiving my testimony in opposition of HB 4002A. This policy bill appears to have been fully decided prior to and during this Short Legislative Session. As an employer, I care deeply for the employees who are on our payroll. Without a dependable workforce, my cattle operation would not function. The passage of HB4002A jeopardizes my ability to maintain my workforce by requiring wages at time and half over 40 hours. This policy discussion has not taken into account the myriad facets of production agriculture in Oregon. Simply put, a “one size fits all” policy does nothing but put good people out of work.

When Oregonians are asked about where they prefer their food to originate, they respond with a statement supporting local production. Passing HB 4002A puts access to local food production in jeopardy. Farmers and ranchers are at a breaking point and this bill pushes them beyond the point of recovery.

Offering tax credits and refundable loans to agricultural producers does nothing to meet the day-to-day cost of doing business. The agricultural producers who have been vocal in this conversation prior to and during this session have declined tax credits as the solution.

Please do not pass this flawed policy bill from this committee.

Respectfully,

Cameron S Kerns
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