

February 24, 2022

To the Joint Committee on Farm Worker Overtime:

My name is Caitlin Seyfried, and I am the Programs Manager at North Coast Food Web. We are a non-profit located in Astoria working with farms and food businesses on the Oregon North Coast to support their financial success and our community's access to food. We believe deeply that food can and should be produced in a way that is ethical for all workers.

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.

Farmworkers as essential workers and as a job sector that is majority people of color (historically being majority Black and presently immigrants from Latin America/the Caribbean) should not be excluded from fair pay under the Federal Labor Standards Act.

We believe farmworkers should be respected, and discriminatory treatment of farmworkers is a direct result of racism to maintain economic control. There is no valid justification for excluding farmworkers from receiving overtime pay. In a good year, farmworkers deal with hazardous conditions and exploitation. Agricultural workers deserve overtime pay:

- In Oregon, farmworkers have inhaled dangerous smoky air from fires, labored during COVID-19 without proper PPE or protections when they get sick, and worked through winter storms.
- Farmworkers are underpaid and exploited for their cheap labor. According to the National Agricultural Workers Survey, individual farm workers earn \$15,000 to \$17,499 a year and families are estimated to make between \$20,000 and \$25,000 a year.
- Farmwork is place-based and time-bound due to crop harvest windows, which means during peak harvesting season when workers can earn the most money, they may be forced to choose between their health and putting food on their families' table.
- Most farmworkers and their families do not have healthcare coverage through their employer. As a result, migrant and seasonal farmworkers experience higher rates of specific health problems such as diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease and cancer than most other Oregonians.

HB 4002 will recognize farmworkers as laborers and as essential workers deserving of overtime pay. According to OHA, there are an estimated 174,000 migrant and seasonal farmworkers, and related family members, that contribute to Oregon's multi-billion dollar agricultural industry.

Overtime pay will contribute to economic stability in a class of workers who have been excluded from basic labor standards such as minimum wage, collective bargaining rights, and OT pay. With better wages, there will be an increase in consumer spending, especially in local businesses and rural communities.

**I urge you to vote Yes on HB 4002 to pass farmworker overtime in the 2022 Legislative Session to ensure farmworkers in Oregon are paid fairly for their skilled and essential labor.**

Sincerely,

*Caitlin Seyfried*  
*Programs Manager*  
*North Coast Food Web*