



TO: House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water  
FR: Ira Cuello-Martinez, PCUN  
RE: Neutral for HB 3098

February 2, 2023

Chair Helm, Vice-Chairs Hartman and Owens, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Ira Cuello-Martinez and I am the policy and advocacy director at PCUN, Oregon's Farmworker Union. PCUN's mission is to empower farmworkers and working-class Latinx families in Oregon by building community, increasing Latinx representation in elections, and policy advocacy on both the national and state levels.

I'm here to provide testimony on HB 3098, which would direct the Oregon Department of Agriculture, in consultation with the Pesticide Analytical and Response Centre, to establish a farmworker outreach program.

Pesticides continue to be a top concern for many of our members. There are serious health impacts that can result from pesticide exposure at work and when going home to their families due to pesticide residue that may be on their clothes and skin. Farmworker families who live in employer-provided housing are also susceptible to toxic pesticide drift.

Continuous exposure to pesticides has led to adverse health outcomes such as cancer. Pregnant farmworker women have shared concerns about the impact of pesticide exposure on their fetus development and the long-term neurological harm to their babies. Our members have also expressed concerns about their lack of understanding of what safety protocols are in place, inadequate protective personal equipment to work with (or near) pesticides, and reporting mechanisms for pesticide-related incidents. Needless to say, pesticide exposure is a big issue and we appreciate the legislature's efforts to address these concerns.

With that being said, PCUN has some strong recommendations to add to the bill that would significantly improve the effectiveness of the desired 'farmworker outreach program' under the Oregon Department of Agriculture. Specifically, we would like to see the bill add language that

explicitly requires ODA to include farmworker-serving organizations and other key stakeholders as consultants and collaborators during the development of this program. Organizations such as PCUN have successfully built trust and confidence among the Oregon farmworker population through our outreach and education programs. Farmworker-serving organizations also have the necessary expertise and knowledge in contributing to building a culturally sensitive program. In addition, we would like to see the training and outreach materials translated into the most commonly spoken mesoamerican Indigenous languages among Oregon farmworkers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and we strongly urge you to add language to HB 3098 to ensure key stakeholders are involved with the development of the farmworker outreach program.

Ira Cuello-Martinez  
Policy and Advocacy Director  
PCUN