

Submitter: John Rietmann
On Behalf Of: John and Kerry Rietmann Farms
Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment
Measure: HB3158

As an Oregon wheat producer, I am writing in complete opposition to House Bill 3158. This bill is an assault on all the industries that utilize and own heavy diesel equipment; the hardworking industries that are the backbone of the State of Oregon's economy and participate in making this state function. These same industries provide food, products, and jobs for all Oregonians. The state's own Board of Agriculture reported in 2021 that "With a 50 billion annual impact, Oregon agriculture plays a huge role in the state's economy. This bill has no other outcome or intention than to put these businesses under. My family farm depends on the efficient power of diesel for tractors, combines, trucks, and pickups without which we could not produce our product. Each of these pieces of equipment take numerous tires to operate. These onerous and burdensome taxes risk putting us out of business – and even diminish the worth of our land and assets, as no one else could make a living here either, with this huge financial drain. We live in a dryland environment – diesel engines can be utilized in the field without the fire danger of a gasoline engine. This bill seems to target my operation rather specifically. . . and any business that utilizes heavy equipment. This equipment does not impact the air shed in any significant way as they are utilized over thousands of acres. In addition, our acres of green plants sequester enormous amounts of carbon naturally and return oxygen to the air. Gathering revenue from food growers, and builders, and trucking companies, to save face with the environmental agenda – and destroying the foundation of our economy is an irresponsible and rather evil policy. The environment is not truly the purpose of this bill - or you would not allow (in opposition to land use laws of this state) the construction of solar panels on prime farmland zoned as such. Your job is to serve the needs of the people of this state – not to become greedy revenue enhancers with no one to spend it on. It is a perpetrated falsehood that these types of equipment are primary polluters and I do not believe this is so – nor that that is the purpose of the bill. This is an ill-advised attempt to raise revenue on the backs of those who provide food, jobs, and economic well-being to our state. In addition, this bill is an attempt to impose a sales tax on a specific and limited segment of the population. I believe it remains the law that all sales taxes are still to be approved only by the voters of the state rather than the legislature. I hope you will defeat this bill soundly. John and Kerry Rietmann