

FROM: Sammi Teo, Public Policy Advocate, Oregon Food Bank
TO: House Committee On Labor and Workplace Standards
RE: YES on HB 2548, Farmworker Standards Board
DATE: March 12, 2025



Dear Chair Grayber, Vice-Chairs Elmer and Muñoz, and Members of the Committee,

Oregon Food Bank's mission is "to eliminate hunger and its root causes... *because no one should be hungry.*" We pursue this goal in two key ways: we foster community connections to help people access nutritious food today, and we advocate to change policies that drive hunger and poverty.

It is impossible to understate how essential farmworkers are in every facet of our state. They plant, grow, and harvest the food that we all nourish ourselves with. They are the boots on the ground that carry the entire agricultural industry— helping to plan for the future so that we can all continue to enjoy the fruits of their labor for generations to come.

In Oregon, there are over 72,000 farmworkers who contribute over \$6.4 Billion to our state's economy, yet they experience poor working conditions and earn an average of just \$34,500 annually. Most farmworkers are immigrants from Mexico, Guatemala, and Central America, many of whom speak an Indigenous language.

HB 2548 will give historically excluded workers their first voice in setting industry standards with real enforcement power and accountability. The board will ensure access to fair wages, safe working conditions, and protection from retaliation. By allowing farmworkers to set standards for their industry, **HB 2548 not only helps keep farmworkers safe, but also improves the likelihood that agricultural labor, an essential and critical industry in Oregon, can provide stable employment— a critical factor in reducing rates of poverty and food insecurity.**

Cities and states across the country have proven that workforce standards boards work. These boards bring workers together with industry and public representatives to set meaningful standards, with real enforcement power to ensure accountability. From New York's farm laborers to Minnesota's nursing home staff to Seattle's domestic workers, these boards give workers the voice and protections they deserve and give our communities the essential food we need.

I urge you to vote YES on HB 2548 to create a Farmworker Standards Board and allow farmworkers to set standards for their industry. Thank you.

Oregon Food Bank
Headquarters /
Metro Services
7900 NE 33rd Drive
Portland, OR 97211
503-282-0555

Oregon Food Bank
Washington County
Services
1870 NW 173rd Ave
Beaverton, OR 97006
503-439-6510

Oregon Food Bank
Tillamook County
Services
PO Box 1344
Tillamook, OR 97141
503-842-3154

Oregon Food Bank
Southeast Oregon
Services
773 S Oregon Street
Ontario, OR 97914
541-889-9206

Columbia Gorge
Food Bank
3610 Crates Way
The Dalles, OR 97058
541-370-2333

