



**BEAVERTON AREA**  
**Chamber of Commerce<sup>SM</sup>**

House Committee on Labor and Workplace Standards

Representatives Valderrama, Munoz, Nelson

Dear Members of the Committee,

Oregon law currently allows for at-will employment, meaning both employers and employees can terminate the employment relationship without notice or cause, except in specific cases like public employment or contracts. All industries in Oregon are considered at-will, including farms and ranches. HB 2548 would dramatically alter this structure, creating significant challenges and litigation risk for agricultural employers.

HB 2548 puts Oregon's farm and ranch families in an untenable position.

- **Shift in Burden of Proof:** HB 2548 would require employers to prove the reasonableness of a termination, shifting the burden to them. Family farms and ranches would be vulnerable to costly litigation, as they would need to defend against employment claims, even in situations involving market conditions, poor yields, or weather events.
- **Increased Litigation Costs:** Family farms already face enormous financial strain. It costs around \$75,000 just to settle a claim before it reaches court. Adding legal risks will only increase financial pressure, especially for small, family-run operations.
- **Economic Hardships:** Many Oregon farms are already struggling with poor yields and low commodity prices. Most will spend the next several years recovering from cash losses incurred in 2023 and 2024. HB 2548 adds another layer of uncertainty that could force family farms into financial ruin.
- **Impediments to Staffing Flexibility:** HB 2548 limits necessary flexibility for staffing and termination decisions, making it harder for employers to navigate the unpredictability of farming. These restrictions could lead to difficulty in hiring and maintaining a workforce. HB 2548 threatens the livelihood of family farms and ranches by imposing unnecessary legal burdens. It increases costs and limits the flexibility needed to manage agricultural businesses. At a time when family farms are struggling to stay afloat, the legislature should reject this punitive concept.

Respectfully submitted,

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