



Dear Committee Members:

We are a 3<sup>rd</sup> generation farm in Clackamas County and we oppose HB 2548- the Agricultural Workforce Labor Standards Board.

Every week it seems, I'm being called to write against another bad bill.

Another Bill "attacking family farms."

Another Bill that will create hardship for employees.

Another Bill that makes us resentful to try to live and work in Oregon, instead of deeply proud.

Another week where we feel bullied.

Another week of pleading for understanding, in an industry that is already very hard.

It is a difficult life, and more people are choosing not to do it every day. And I certainly understand why, especially in Oregon. I can't figure it out.

So, I'll continue here, again this week. Trying to explain why we feel bullied and bulldozed.

HB2548 is bad policy for the following reasons:

**It is redundant:**

Section 4, (2), (A): It is already law to pay minimum wage.

Section 4, (2), (B): It is already law to pay minimum wage to workers from a Visa program.

Section 4, (2), (b): It is already law to pay minimum wage to piece rate workers.

Section 4, (2), (c): It is already law to provide rest breaks.

Section 4, (2), (A, B,): It is already law to provide training within the paid hours of the work day.

Section 4, (2), (e): It is already law to provide a safe working environment.

**It is obvious:**

Employees are trained and provided necessary tools and safety equipment, in accordance with all kinds of rules. However, the biggest is just common sense.

Yes, we train our workers to do the job we need them to do. They get paid for the training hours. We constantly train. We train in English, in Spanish, in writing and pictures and demonstration. We train before the day begins and follow up at the end. We make adjustments. We add, we remove, we clarify, we shift. All day, every day.

How would any of us accomplish anything if this was not the case?

**It is bureaucracy:**

Section 6, Section 7: It is more meetings, more reporting, more expense, more time. Another layer of government where government already exists. It's a waste of resources.

**It is litigious:**

Section 9, 10, 11: If you've ever worked on a crew, everyone knows right away who the bad apple is. It's obvious, for all kinds of reasons. It's no big deal really; it happens. The best way to spoil the whole entire crew is to let that one have provisions that make everyone fearful to do what's right. It makes everyone doing the right thing feel trapped, angry and unable to work happily.

**It sets a bad precedent:**

Section 12: Oregon is an at-will employment state. So are 49 other states. HB2548 wants to change that just for one small percentage of the workforce? Again, I ask—why farms? Why farmworkers? Will we then revoke at-will employment for other sub-sets of the population at random? People who are employed in grocery stores, or book shops, or restaurants? And then special boards to govern each of those subsets? It is wasteful, and arbitrary.

I make these statements, and ask these questions in earnest. The wolves are constantly at our doorstep, and I can't understand why.

I offer you a different view:

- Garlic harvest in August, where I make home cooked lunch every day for 6 weeks to ensure our crew has a hearty meal when we are working in places that make it difficult to run to the store.
- The hunting trips, during the winter months. Everyone goes, whether you've been with us 2 weeks, or 5 years.
- What it feels like to sign up the son of a migrant worker, who now has full time, year-round employment with us (with insurance!) for the first time.
- Company vehicles, to travel to and from work.
- Paying full wages to employees who have family emergencies.

I would love to continue sharing how much pride we put into taking care of our "farmworkers." But it's not like that.

They are us; we are a family. We are the same.

I urge you to vote NO on HB2548.

Sincerely,

Katie Kenagy  
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Hubbard, Oregon