



March 11, 2025

To: Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici  
From: Powell's Nursery Inc  
RE: House Bill 2548

Good Day Congresswoman Bonamici,

My name is Patrick Newton and I am the president of Powell's Nursery Inc. located in Gaston, Oregon, and I urge you to oppose House Bill 2548.

I have serious concerns about HB 2548 and its potential impact on all farming operations in Oregon. Small farms already face many challenges, particularly in terms of labor costs, regulatory burdens, and the need for flexibility in staffing decisions.

Here are the key issues I see:

1. **\*\*Increased Regulatory Burden\*\***: The bill would empower unelected officials to set wages and safety rules, adding more regulations that could disproportionately affect small farms.
2. **\*\*Loss of At-Will Employment\*\***: By removing at-will employment for farms, you would face challenges in making necessary staffing decisions without the risk of costly lawsuits.
3. **\*\*Shifting Burden of Proof\*\***: The requirement for employers to prove the reasonableness of terminations could expose family farms to increased litigation risks, further straining financial resources.
4. **\*\*Economic Hardships\*\***: With many farms already struggling due to low commodity prices and poor yields, the additional uncertainties introduced by this bill could threaten their viability.

5. **\*\*Staffing Flexibility\*\***: The limitations on staffing and termination decisions could hinder your ability to adapt to the unpredictable nature of farming, making it harder to maintain a reliable workforce.

6. **\*\*Who will be profiting / gaining from this bill... The farmers? The workers? Or the members of the Workforce Standards Board?**

I call for the Legislature to reject this bill out of concern for the future of family farms in Oregon. It's important for policymakers to consider the unique challenges faced by the agricultural sector and to ensure that regulations do not inadvertently harm the very businesses they aim to protect.

Sincerely

Patrick Newton