

County Commissioners
Danielle Bethell, Chair
Colm Willis
Kevin Cameron



**Chief Administrative
Officer**
Jan Fritz

MARION COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

March 10, 2025

Chair Representative Dacia Grayber
Vice-Chair Representative Luçetta Elmer
Vice-Chair Representative Lesly Muñoz
Members of the House Committee on Labor and Workplace Standards

Subject: Opposition to House Bill 2548

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

The Marion County Board of Commissioners writes to express our strong opposition to House Bill 2548, which would create additional mandates on agricultural employers, placing an undue burden on their ability to operate efficiently and competitively. Marion County is the number one agricultural-producing county in Oregon, and our farmers are the backbone of the state's economy, providing essential food, jobs, and economic stability for our communities.

HB 2548 would establish an Agricultural Workforce Labor Standards Board, which would have broad authority to set new employment standards, compensation requirements, and termination conditions for agricultural workers. While we fully support fair and safe working conditions for all employees, the one-size-fits-all mandates proposed in this bill fail to recognize the unique challenges of the agricultural industry, which is already facing labor shortages, rising costs, and regulatory burdens.

The prohibition on terminating an agricultural worker without cause would create an overly restrictive and bureaucratic process that limits farm owners' ability to manage their workforce effectively. Agriculture is a seasonal and dynamic industry, and employers must have the flexibility to make staffing decisions based on fluctuating labor needs, economic conditions, and market demands. Restricting their ability to do so will create uncertainty, increase legal liabilities, and force many farms to cut back on hiring or shift operations elsewhere.

This bill would add yet another layer of regulatory complexity at a time when farmers are already navigating significant challenges, including inflation, rising labor costs, and supply chain disruptions. Imposing additional mandates on agricultural employers will not only hurt farmers but also lead to higher food prices, reduced local job opportunities, and increased dependence on imported agricultural products.

Marion County urges the Committee to consider the real-world impact of HB 2548 on Oregon's agricultural economy. Instead of imposing additional restrictions on farmers, we encourage policies that provide flexibility, support workforce development, and promote economic sustainability for both employers and workers.

We respectfully ask the Committee to reject HB 2548 in its current form and consider alternative approaches that support both agricultural businesses and their employees without placing excessive mandates on farm operations. Thank you for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to reach out if we can provide additional insight on this critical issue.

Sincerely,



Danielle Bethell
Chair



Colm Willis
Commissioner



Kevin Cameron
Commissioner