

E-mail: vlygrwrs@web-ster.com

P.O. BOX 610
HUBBARD, OR. 97032



Website: valleygrowers.com

PHONE (503) 651-3535

FAX (503) 651-3044

VALLEY GROWERS
NURSERY & LANDSCAPE INC.

3/11/2025

To: Congresswoman Lucetta Elmer (R-McMinnville)

From: Vicqui Guevara, Owner, President, Valley Growers Nursery and Landscape

RE: Opposition to Oregon House Bill 2548

Dear Congresswoman Lucetta Elmer,

Valley Growers Nursery and Landscape located in Hubbard Oregon, respectfully requests your opposition to Oregon House Bill 2548.

The Reasons For my request that Oregon House Bill 2548 be opposed are as follows:

- HB 2548 threatens our ability to keep farming. Oregon already has some of the highest labor costs in the country, and after several tough years, we cannot afford more regulations and wage increases.
- HB 2548 would give unelected officials the power to set wages and safety rules that go far beyond current protections. This would add more regulatory burden to small farms like ours. Farmers know how devastating this regulatory model is. Oregon's state agencies have adopted very harmful regulations in the last five years with little to no accountability for their actions. This board would be no different; its members are not even elected.
- HB 2548 unfairly targets agriculture by taking away at-will employment. This means we would not be able to make necessary staffing decisions without the risk of costly lawsuits. One claim can cost tens of thousands of dollars or more.
- Farms should not be forced to keep employees who may not meet performance expectations or adapt to the demands of the job. All other sectors in Oregon would be at-will, but farms—whose employment needs are impacted by weather, yields, trade, market conditions, pests, diseases, etc.—would not. Not only is that unfair, but it would result in job loss, not job security.
- HB 2548 does not help workers or consumers; it just makes farming harder and more expensive. We have already had to reduce hours for workers to comply with agricultural overtime, and this bill would have even more severe consequences.
- HB 2548 shifts the burden of proof. The proposal 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.
- HB 2548 would increase 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.
- HB 2548 would increase 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. This proposal adds another layer of uncertainty that could force family farms into financial ruin.
- HB 2548 would take away staffing flexibility: The proposals limit 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 would threaten 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.

Your understanding & action to this request is appreciated. Please acknowledge receipt of this letter today.

Sincerely,

V. Guevara, Pres. / Owner

Vicqui Guevara, Owner and President, Valley Growers Nursery and Landscape.

Oregon Landscape Contractor's License #6257 • DBE/WBE/MBE Certification #1462 • SBA 8(a) Certified Contractor
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