

I urge you to oppose HB 2548 because it threatens my ability to keep farming. Oregon already has some of the highest labor costs, and after several tough years, we can't afford more regulations and wage increases.

This bill gives unelected bureaucrats excessive power to set wages and safety rules, adding unnecessary burdens on small farms. Oregon agencies have already imposed harmful regulations with little accountability—this board would be no different.

HB 2548 also removes at-will employment for farms, exposing us to costly lawsuits and limiting our ability to make necessary staffing decisions. Unlike other industries, farms face unpredictable challenges like weather, yields, and trade. This unfair restriction could lead to job losses, not job security.

This bill doesn't help workers or consumers; it just makes farming harder and more expensive. HB 2548 could force me to cut my workforce, further reduce hours of our current workforce, change crops to less labor-intensive crops, automate, mechanize or perhaps sell our farm.

The -2 amendment worsens the bill by creating a biased board that would impose regulations regardless of a farm's ability to comply. It unfairly mandates union-only training for all employees, disregarding the needs of seasonal workers. It also allows emotional damage claims and prevents farm employers from a fair legal defense, inviting costly lawsuits.

The recently passed agricultural overtime bill was supposed to help farm workers, but in reality, it has reduced their paychecks. Instead of receiving more money, many workers are seeing fewer hours as farms struggle to manage increased labor costs. Farmers simply cannot afford to pay unlimited overtime, so they are forced to cap hours or hire additional workers, meaning existing employees lose out on the opportunity to work the hours they once relied on to support their families.

Our farm has long-standing relationships with our employees, many of whom have worked side by side with us for decades—some for over 40 years. These employees are not just workers; they are part of our extended family. We have built trust, mutual respect, and a shared commitment to the success of our farm. HB 2548 threatens these relationships by imposing unnecessary burdens that could force us to make difficult staffing decisions and would place a wedge between us and the employees, ultimately harming the very people this bill claims to protect.

If HB 2548 passes, it will be the end of Oregon agriculture as we know it. The weight of excessive regulations, rising costs, and legal uncertainty will drive family farms out of business, consolidate agricultural operations into the hands of a few large corporations, and devastate rural communities that rely on farming for their livelihoods.

Please vote no on this harmful bill to protect Oregon farms and agriculture jobs.