

**DEB PATTERSON  
STATE SENATOR  
DISTRICT 10**



**OREGON STATE SENATE**

March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025

House Committee on Labor and Workplace Standards  
Oregon State Capitol  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301

**Re:** Support for Establishing the Farmworker Standards Board (HB 2548)

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

My name is Deb Patterson, and I represent Senate District 10. I am writing to express unwavering support for HB 2548, which proposes the creation of a Farmworker Standards Board in Oregon. This bill is not just legislation but a crucial step toward equity, safety, and sustainability in our agricultural sector—a sector foundational to Oregon’s economy and the well-being of countless families across our state.

Oregon's farmworkers are integral to our state's agricultural success and face dire conditions with inadequate protections. It is time to ensure that the hands that feed us are not left empty. The Farmworker Standards Board will empower workers and employers to collaboratively establish fair wages, safe working conditions, and necessary training protocols. This board will correct historical exclusions and establish a platform for true worker empowerment and industry sustainability.

Farmworkers are the backbone of an industry that contributes over \$6.4 billion annually to Oregon's economy, yet many earn significantly below a living wage. HB 2548 addresses these disparities by fostering an environment where farmworker voices are heard and instrumental in shaping industry standards. This legislation is a stride towards rectifying the injustices faced by a workforce predominantly composed of Latino and immigrant laborers, aligning with Oregon's values of fairness and equity.

The Farmworker Standards Board is designed as a balanced forum that respects the voices of both employers and employees, ensuring that all stakeholders can contribute to the rule-making

process. This approach not only enhances compliance and effectiveness but also ensures that the standards developed are practical, equitable, and tailored to the unique needs of Oregon's agricultural sector.

A proactive approach is necessary as we continue to see the implications of farm consolidation and the evolving agricultural landscape. HB 2548 offers a solution that ensures the sustainability of our farms and the labor force that supports them. I urge you, as members of this esteemed committee, to support this bill, affirming Oregon's commitment to its agricultural heritage and workforce.

Thank you for considering this testimony. I look forward to working together toward a fairer future for our farmworkers and the entire agricultural community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deb Patterson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Deb Patterson  
State Senator