



March 12, 2025

To: House Committee On Labor and Workplace Standards

From: Beth Klingner, member of the Board of Directors for the Washington County Chamber of Commerce, Owner, Dion Vineyard

Re: Opposition to HB 2548

My name is Beth Klingner. My husband and I own Dion Vineyard, a small, family-run winery in Cornelius, Oregon, in Washington County. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I am here to **oppose HB 2548** because of the unintended harm it would cause to Oregon's wineries, vineyards, and the workers we rely on.

Our winery depends on skilled agricultural workers who help with everything from tending the vines to harvesting grapes at just the right time. We are committed to paying fair wages and providing safe working conditions, and we value the people who make our business possible.

However, HB 2548 would create a new unelected board with broad power over wages, benefits, and workplace conditions. It takes a one-size-fits-all approach to agriculture without considering the realities of running a small vineyard and winery like mine.

One major concern is that the bill eliminates at-will employment for agricultural workers. In the wine industry, we are at the mercy of the seasons, weather, and changing market conditions. If we have a late frost, wildfire smoke, or other unexpected challenges, we need the flexibility to adjust our workforce quickly. This bill would make that much harder, putting additional strain on small farms and wineries already struggling with rising costs.

Speaking of costs, our industry is already under pressure. Labor costs, materials, and supply chain issues continue to rise. On top of that, federal tariffs on wine exports make it even harder for Oregon wineries to compete. Adding new state-imposed regulations would only drive up costs further, hurting not just wineries but also the workers and consumers we serve.

We all want strong protections for agricultural workers, but this bill is not the right solution. I urge the committee to reject HB 2548 and instead work on solutions that help both workers and small businesses thrive.

Thank you for your time, and I'm happy to answer any questions.