

Parker Sherrell
PO Box 508
Odell, Oregon 97044
03/12/2025

To: Oregon House Committee

Subject: Opposition to House Bill 2548 – Impact on Oregon's Family Farms

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to House Bill 2548, which proposes the establishment of the Agricultural Workforce Labor Standards Board and introduces regulations that would significantly impact family farms like mine in Oregon. As a dedicated pear farmer, I am deeply concerned about the detrimental effects this bill would have on our agricultural community.

Undermining Farmer Autonomy:

HB 2548 seeks to transfer critical decisions regarding staffing, wages, benefits, and training to an unelected board, thereby stripping farmers of their ability to manage their own operations effectively. This shift undermines the direct relationship between employers and workers, which is essential for addressing the unique challenges inherent in agriculture.

Economic Viability at Risk:

The bill introduces additional regulatory burdens that could escalate operational costs for family farms already operating on thin margins. Oregon's agricultural sector exports approximately 80% of its produce, competing with international markets. Increasing costs could diminish our competitiveness, potentially leading to farm closures, job losses, and reduced agricultural output.

Existing Protections Are Adequate:

Oregon currently enforces some of the nation's most robust labor laws, offering comprehensive protections to all workers, including those in agriculture. The introduction of HB 2548 appears redundant and may impose unnecessary constraints on farmers without providing substantial additional benefits to workers.

Elimination of At-Will Employment:

The bill proposes to abolish at-will employment specifically for agricultural workers, obligating employers to substantiate the reasonableness of terminations. This change exposes family farms to increased litigation risks and associated costs, further straining our limited resources.

In light of these concerns, I urge you to vote **against** HB 2548. Instead, I encourage the legislature to collaborate with the farming community to develop solutions that support both the welfare of agricultural workers and the sustainability of family farms.

Thank you for considering my perspective on this critical issue.

Sincerely,

Parker Sherrell
Columbia River Land Management LLC
Hood River, Oregon