

For the record, my name is Charles Ortiz.

March 12, 2025

Chair Grayber, Members of the committee

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. I oppose HB 2548.

I am a farm owner and a professional agronomist.

Please stop.

You know farmers and farm employers aren't some nameless faceless cold hearted people. We care for our employees they are key to our success. We are your neighbors. We are Oregonians and we care for Oregon. We are stewards. We are real people who care about our employees and appreciate them dearly. It is painful to hear that there are employers who exploit farmworkers, but HB 2548 will do nothing to stop this.

Before I became a farmer and agronomist I started out as a farm employee. The farmers I worked for helped me get my start in farming. They encouraged my pursuit of a career in agriculture. If HB 2548 had been in effect at that time I doubt that would have been possible. At least not in Oregon.

Adding even more layers of redundant, poorly informed regulation will make it just that much harder for new and emerging farmers in Oregon to compete with out of state and foreign production of agricultural goods. The smaller and newer the farm the greater the burden HB 2548 will impose on them.

HB 2548 will do nothing for agricultural workers except ship their jobs to other countries where there really are substandard living conditions and cheap labor without standards while concurrently continuing to undermine the viability of Oregon's agricultural industry and our ability to care for our employees.

We already have numerous state and federal regulation governing workplace standards, creating another misguided state empowered bureaucracy to enforce the same rules that other agencies and departments govern is redundant and a gateway to confusion.

Please stop proposing heavy-handed regulatory actions that will harm agricultural production in our state. Please stop this de facto war on Oregon Agriculture. Actions have consequences. Oregon Agriculture is a large and important part of Oregon's economic engine, but that's not guaranteed to continue if you continue down this ill-advised path.

If you support Oregon agriculture and local food and fiber production, please vote no on HB 2548.

Sincerely and Thank You.