

Submitter: Sue Nackoney
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Labor and Workplace Standards
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2548

Dear Chair Grayber, Vice-Chairs Elmer and Muñoz, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Sue Nackoney, I am an organic farmer, I live in Beavercreek, OR, and I am writing in strong support of HB 2548 to create a Farmworker Standards Board in Oregon.

There are over 72,000 Oregon farmworkers, who put food on our tables and contribute over \$6.4B to our state's economy, yet they experience poor working conditions and earn an average of just \$34,500 annually. Most farmworkers are immigrants from Mexico, Guatemala, and Central America, many of whom speak an Indigenous language.

HB 2548 will give historically excluded workers their first voice in setting industry standards with real enforcement power and accountability. The board will ensure access to fair wages, safe conditions, and protection from retaliation. This board will also create a space where consistent conversations with equal representation from workers and employers can set policy for the agricultural industry, outside of the rushed timelines and political pressures of a legislative session.

Cities and states across the country have proven that workforce standards boards work. These boards bring workers together with industry and public representatives to set meaningful standards, with real enforcement power to ensure accountability. From New York's farm laborers to Minnesota's nursing home staff to Seattle's domestic workers, these boards give workers the voice and protections they deserve and give our communities the essential food we need.

At my farm, I felt that smoke rules set forth after the 2020 wildfires were not strict enough, so I set rules for my farm that are more protective for health. The same goes for heat. It is crucial to have the people who actually do the work on farms to craft policy that guides the conditions for their work. No one wants more farmworkers to die in heat domes or have long term health impacts from wildfire smoke inhalation.

I urge you to vote YES on HB 2548 to create a Farmworker Standards Board and give farmworkers the ability to set standards for the industry.

Sincerely,

Sue Nackoney