

March 14, 2025

To: House Committee On Labor and Workplace Standards

From: Mike McCarthy, Trout Creek Orchard, llc

HB 2548

Chair Grayber and Members of the Committee:

**Please oppose HB 2548.**

I have observed over the last many years that the legislature does not do the needed calculations required before making legislation. This is a perfect example. There is no more that can be given by farms in terms of wages and benefits. Please study the data.

Below is a graph showing the impact of the high farm worker wages in Oregon on farm income. Labor intensive farming like fruit production in the Hood River Valley is now unprofitable as is other fruit and vegetable production around Oregon. A one dollar increase in wages has created a totally non profitable situation for farmers in Hood River County. Farmers are borrowing more each year to raise their crop, eroding their hard earned equity. This is real.

Farm worker wages in Oregon are some of the highest in the US and thus the highest of any countries in the world. How can we compete with countries like Mexico that pay \$1.59 per hour? Food production is leaving the US.

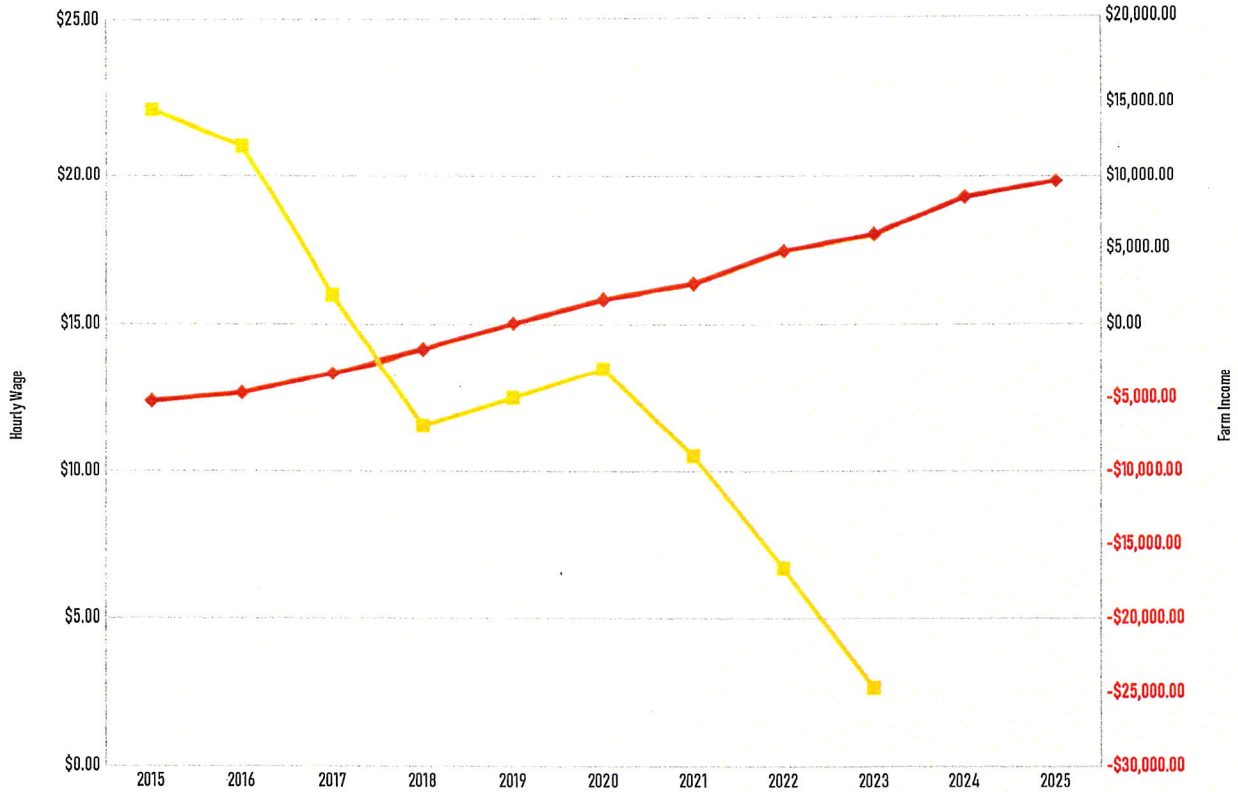
Based on USDA National Agricultural Statistic Service/Dept of Labor annual study, farm workers in Oregon if working full time make \$40,000 per year if they work 40 hours per week. Many work more hours so make well over \$40,000. And of course many in the beef industry, dairy industry, fruit industry and vegetable production receive free on-farm housing with utilities paid. One of the few industries that tries to ensure that their work force has OSHA approved housing. VERY rare at a time when housing is critical.

If we could pay more we would.

Many older farmers are trying to hold on to their farms hoping to transfer their farms to the next generation. Low profitability, the horrible farming environment in Oregon and the long hours is discouraging young farmers from even trying to farm. Meanwhile the burden of maintaining farming in Oregon is falling on an older and older demographic. This extreme attack on farming is falling on a Senior Citizen population in a very unfair manner making them work longer hours to try to survive. A great way to end a long career; all the value of your farm disappearing due to more borrowing and no profits, with the Oregon legislature working hard to destroy what is left.

Oppose HB 2548 Destroying farms is not progressive.

### Oregon Farmworker Prevailing Wage vs. Farm Income



Hood River County Farm Income vs. Farmworker Wages by Year  
Data from the Dept of Labor and the Dept of Commerce

◆ Prev. Wage  
■ Income