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Chair Grayber, Vice-Chairs Elmer and Muñoz, Members of the committee:

I write to you today on behalf of Oregon's farmers and ranchers to express our strong opposition to HB 2548 and the increasing burden this legislative body has placed on our agricultural community over the last decade.

Multigenerational family farms are disappearing at an alarming rate. Between 2017 and 2022 alone, Oregon lost over 2,000 farms. That is not just a statistic—it's a warning sign. It is the result of costly policies that continue to push small and mid-sized farms out of business, leading to consolidation and fewer family-owned operations.

Agricultural overtime mandates, increasing input costs, and market pressures are accelerating this decline. Total farm expenses have surged by nearly 28% in recent years, with seed and plant costs up 80%, fertilizer and chemicals rising by 40-50%, and labor costs skyrocketing—contract labor alone has increased by a staggering 159%. And now, HB 2548 threatens to pile on yet another completely unnecessary cost driver.

We cannot continue down this path. Farmers and ranchers are already stretched to the breaking point and we are seeing the human toll—stress and financial pressure are pushing many to the brink. That's why we supported SB 779, the AgriStress Helpline, because we recognize that we have a mental health crisis in agriculture. The regulatory and financial burdens have created an unsustainable situation, and the bubble will burst—whether it's farms closing, jobs disappearing, or an irreversible decline in Oregon's agricultural economy.

While total farm sales in Oregon have increased, that growth lags behind the national average, and it is not keeping pace with the skyrocketing costs. In 2022 69% of Oregon farms operated a cash loss. Simply put, farms are spending more and taking home less.

HB 2548 would be yet another blow to an industry that is already teetering on the edge. We urge lawmakers to recognize the real-world consequences of these policies—not just in numbers, but in livelihoods lost and communities changed forever.

It's time for Oregon to start supporting its farmers instead of regulating us out of business.

Sincerely,

Angi Bailey

President

Oregon Farm Bureau Federation