

Dear Co-Chairs, Vice Co-Chairs and Members of the Joint Committee,

My name is Emileni Lopez, I am the proud daughter of farmworkers, and I live in Mt. Angel, Oregon. Today, I am writing to you as someone whose neighbors, community, and loved ones are directly impacted by this bill. I urge you to prioritize HB 3193, the Farmworker Disaster Relief Fund.

It is no secret that farmworkers are the backbone of our food system, we all know this to be true. They make it possible for all of us to eat, bringing fresh produce directly to our tables through some of the toughest working conditions. Despite how essential our farmworkers are, when disasters strike whether that's extreme heat, wildfire smoke, or freezing temperatures, farmworkers are often the first to lose work and the last to get support.

I am often surrounded by community members who share their stories about how incredibly difficult it is to survive each year's summers and winters. They talk about how their bodies ache from the cold, and how exhausted they are after long summer days spent under a relentless sun that offers no relief, all while knowing that each year only grows more extreme. Working in these conditions is unsafe and puts our community members' health at risk. Our farmworkers are some of the most hardworking people I know and it is a deep disservice for us to continue turning a blind eye to the consistent injustices they face while simply trying to put food on their tables and keep a roof over their heads — just like every one of us. Farmworkers are an integral part of who we are as a state. If we know that their labor sustains us, if we know they continue to show up even in the harshest conditions, then we must also know that they deserve protection and financial support in instances where they cannot and should not work in these dire conditions.

Our community members are worth this bill, and so much more. They are worth the stability that a disaster relief fund like HB 3193 can offer. They are worthy of policies that reflect the reality they live through, year after year.

HB 3193 isn't just a bill. It's an acknowledgment that the climate crisis is already here, and it's hitting our essential workers first and hardest. It's a chance for Oregon to show up, not just with words, but with real support that helps farmworkers weather the literal storms they're forced to endure. No one should have to choose between putting their health at risk and being able to provide for themselves and their families. This is the reality for far too many farmworkers in Oregon. We must listen to and stand with the most essential workers and community members this state is home to.

I urge you to vote YES on HB 3193 and stand by our community.

Sincerely,

Emileni Lopez