

Sinn Farms, Inc

May 29, 2025

Chair Bowman, Vice Chairs Drazan and Pham, Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express Sinn Farms, Inc's opposition to the -7 amendment to HB 2548.

Our Farm has been operating in the Willamette Valley since 1958, and is currently being managed by the third generation (with the fourth generation up and coming). Myself and 5 of my brothers are current owners and operators on the farm, and are raising our families alongside the operation, where we grow blueberries and blackberries.

We have significant concerns about the -7 amendment and the base bill.

The -7 amendment proposes to spend taxpayer dollars on a study to be conducted by Portland State University that would focus on labor standards and working conditions of farmworkers.

We are concerned that the bill excludes a number of important partners in development of a study that are intimately connected to agriculture. Oregon State University, our state's land grant university which has strong connections to and knowledge of all facets of our agricultural sectors, including crop diversity of the industry is excluded. OSU extension reaches all corners of the state with its extension program supported by the state of Oregon - that reach and the relationships are not reflected in the proposal. Additionally, the Oregon Department of Agriculture, who producers, like me work with on a regular basis is not consulted in this study. To engage an organization that is not generally associated in any material way to the realities on the ground of the agricultural industry, seems designed to support an already determined assumption.

As a producer, my company navigate the complex and robust workforce protections and employment practices that our Legislature, agencies, and federal partners put in place, and am concerned that this study focuses on qualitative data rather than cause and effect data - or the impact of what a workforce standard board would do to Oregon's agricultural industries and the adverse impacts it will have for workers.

It is clear the proponents intend to use this biased study to tee up the policy for the 2027 Legislative Session with a pre-determined outcome already baked.

Agriculture is often referred to as the lifeblood of our communities, and we hear constantly from elected politicians and leaders how critical it is protect our food producers. Its amazing to me that our state leadership would be looking to subject our family farms, which currently are undergoing incredibly challenging markets, as well as pressure from significant outside private equity investment dollars competing for land and employees, to additional layers of red tape and regulation. Talented employees are in short supply in every industry, and competition for good employees is always intense. On our operation, we have been regularly approached and propositioned by our employees for changes in duties or increases in pay, based on an offer that they have received from another employer. Thus labor market pressures contribute to modernization and competitive pay. Farmers are price takers, and unlike other industries, costs cannot simply be passed on. Farmers are working on thin-to-sometimes-negative margins, and this type of pre-determined policy outcome will cause crushing regulatory, financial, and liability implications that threaten the viability of agriculture in Oregon as a whole.

For some, this policy will push them to the edge – diminishing vital resources in our rural communities. Over the last five years, there has been a six percent loss of farm land in Oregon - and 65 percent of farms operating in Oregon saw a net cash loss in 2022.

It is clear that proponents of the bill - both the workforce standard board and the study proposed in the amendment have not worked with stakeholders for consultation on either element.

My Company urges you to reject HB 2548 and the -7 amendment.

Nelson Sinn
Finance Manager
Sinn Farms, Inc.