

**JANEEN SOLLMAN
STATE SENATOR
DISTRICT 15**



OREGON STATE SENATE

March 03, 2022

Lori L. Brocker
Secretary of the Senate

RE: Vote Explanation for House Bill 4002 B

Dear Secretary Brocker,

Senate District 15 is a diverse and beautiful district with a mix of urban and rural areas. From the agriculture-rich soil in the western-most area of Forest Grove, to the rolling hills of Helvetia, Senate District 15 supplies food on our tables, trees for our holiday celebrations, and berries and grass seed exported across the seas. Much of the rural parts of the district is made up of small family farms. I have taken many farm and nursery tours, rode in combines and pickers at harvest time and held community conversations with virtual rooms filled with the generational workers that work so very hard to support agriculture in Oregon. House Bill 4002 has been brought forward to align with other western states and provide overtime wages to workers working over 40 hours a week. I've heard from many farmworkers in my district loud, clear and through many tears, three main concerns need to be addressed: excessive heat working conditions, work-life balance for workers and dignified wages for dignified work.

I support the humanitarian concerns that need to be addressed for our farm workforce. With my support, comes some apprehension. I wish to express my concern for potential unintended consequences that may arise from this policy. While some workers want reduced hours to seek the balance their families need, some workers need as many hours to collect as much pay possible during a peak season. I worry that small family farms will find it necessary to cap hours and limit farmworkers to only 40 hours per week and that those farmworkers seeking more hours, will then need to work multiple jobs to ensure enough pay during a shortened season. I worry that our small family farms will be unable to afford to pay overtime when they need it most, during their peak seasons, when time is of the essence to harvesting a crop and dependent on weather cycles. These farmers have told me how worried they are that they will not be able to sustain the overtime pay requirements in this policy and that they worry will have to sell their farms to larger corporations that can more easily absorb higher costs. I was given many examples of how some of the commodities grown in Senate District 15 have farmers being price takers, meaning they do not set the price for the goods they grow, but the processor does. The farmer drops their crops off with the processor and months later is given a check for what the processor is willing to pay, leaving the farmer to take the price offered to them with zero negotiations. I am hopeful that the tax credits and loans available provided in the bill will be a bridge to help see these small family farms through and that we can make adjustments as needed in the ensuing years to ensure that small family farms continue to thrive. My hope, and my advocacy as a leader, will be to make sure we do not experience these unintended consequences for workers and for small family farms.

Farmworkers are essential workers and the product of their labor feeds our families. The work is difficult and challenging. No one should have to work in extreme weather conditions that could potentially be life threatening. I also firmly believe in the right to a work life balance and that people should be paid a living and dignified wage to support their families and their lives. That is why I voted yes on House Bill 4002, to address the issues that are most important to our farmworkers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janeen Sollman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Senate District 15; Areas of Forest Grove, Cornelius, Banks, North Plains, Hillsboro and Aloha/Beaverton

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