

Chair Bowman, vice chairs, and committee members thank you for the opportunity to speak with you on HB2548. My name is Jim Simnitt and I own and run Simnitt Nursery, a second-generation nursery in Canby with my brother Jerry. I am also a past president of the Oregon Association of Nurseries and a proud graduate of Oregon State University.

I have submitted written testimony and in person testimony on the negative impacts this bill will have on my employees, my business, and Oregon Ag in general. Today I wanted to highlight a couple of those issues regarding the proposed amendment to study these impacts. Oregon has some of the strongest labor laws in the nation today. Depending on which university or publication is doing the study, Oregon ranks top or one of the top states for strongest labor laws. Anecdotally I know this because I talk with other nursery growers across the nation and we compare notes. I also sing the praises of some of these rules. It creates an environment of accountability that all employers in Oregon have to abide by. Oregon also has one of the highest minimum wages, which means my inputs are much higher than my competitors across the country.

Oregon Agriculture is wide, vast, and diverse. We have award winning wineries, we are known for our filberts, we have cattle, wheat, and the #1 ag commodity in Oregon, nurseries. Just within my own industry we are extremely diverse. We have nurseries growing large specimen trees that take 10+ years to grow and

nurseries that are doing tissue culture propagation pumping out literally millions of little plants every year. We have also heard today about the diversity of ag employment as part time, seasonal, and full-time employees. This study should be done by those that know the ins and outs of the Oregon Ag economy workforce best like Oregon State University where there is an Agriculture Department with Ag economics. OSU knows how our ag economy works and how they differ from most other industries. They also know how we work with our employees and how that stacks up to our competitors across the country.

While I strongly oppose this bill, I do believe that having institutions like Oregon State University at the table doing the study will give an accurate accounting of agricultural economics and workforce.