

To the DCBS Director and Other it May Concern,

We have run a small family business in Salem since the 1950s. As a family farm, our values are providing good food to our local community and educating the public about where their food comes from. With the difficulties in starting new farm ventures, we consider our family very lucky that we have been able to see our farming business continue now to the 4th generation in our family. Over time, rising prices and taxes have made it difficult to keep adequate staffing on hand and pay our own family a living wage.

The new proposed pure premium rate and the Workers' Benefit Fund Assessment increases are concerning to us. Rate increases like these do not take small businesses into account. Like the new Paid Leave Oregon program, perhaps there needs to be some kind of tiered system. For small employers under 25 employees, there are different expectations for programs like Paid Leave Oregon. We suggest that the Workers Compensation program and Workers' Benefit Fund does something similar with a sliding scale.

Small family businesses like ours cannot continue to suffer so many rate increases over time. We will find it difficult to keep staff and keep our family involved. We strongly urge the Department of Consumer and Business Services to consider our local economy. Our consumers value our business and the products we offer, but they find it difficult to continue supporting small businesses when we are forced to raise our prices to compensate for tax hikes like these. Consider your local consumers' budgets and consider small business owners.

Sincerely,

Christina Fordyce
Co-Owner, Secretary
Fordyce Farm inc.
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