

Attached is my testimony. Also, below is our membership survey.

VDPA surveyed members about questions that have been asked during your committee hearing. Timing was not great because farmers were trying to get crops in but here is a summary:

1. Do you pay your employees the state minimum wage (set to increase to \$14.01 on 1/1/25) 68% of members provide the state minimum wage. Caveat, the farms that said no do provide housing (wifi, TV, AC, heat), transportation to store and appointments, time and a half for holidays. When you calculate that the farms that don't provide the state minimum wage and include the benefits stated about, the wage is well above \$23/hr.
2. Do you provide housing as a benefit? Yes only one member do not but largely all needed benefits are provided.
3. Do you provide other benefits like, food, vehicle, health care? Yes only one member do not but largely all needed benefits are provided.
4. How many days a week are workers expected to work? 6 with an exception of time and half for holidays.
5. What other information would you like to provide? Most workers are paid a salary which increases with holiday pay. Uniforms are provided, vacation after 1 year, transportation to appointments and grocery store or a car is provided.

What the committee should understand is our workforce is our best asset; it doesn't make sense to try to squeeze them for salary or benefits. Having a positive relationship and open-door policy is imperative to ensure our members have enough staff to operate our farms.

Thank you,

Brian

Brian R. Carpenter
General Manager
Champlain Valley Equipment
(802)349-9588