

Submitter: Bill Royle  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and  
Wildfire  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1154

Our family owns over 100 acres of EFU-zoned farmland, and we strongly oppose SB 1154. This bill piles on unnecessary restrictions for farmers while the state is making it easier for projects like the Muddy Creek Solar Park to take farmland out of production. If approved, Muddy Creek will take over 1,500 acres of EFU land for industrial solar use. It's hard to believe the state is serious about protecting agriculture when it's willing to sacrifice prime farmland and wetlands for solar projects while making it harder for farmers to do their jobs. This bill feels like a double standard—claiming to protect farmland but adding rules that only make farming more difficult.

SB 1154 has several provisions that hurt farmers. For starters, Section 13 lets government agencies come onto private property in groundwater management areas without permission to take soil samples and collect data. That's a violation of our privacy and property rights, and it's almost guaranteed to be challenged in court as unconstitutional under the 4th Amendment. The bill also forces farmers in certain areas to follow mandatory groundwater management plans, which could limit how we use nutrients or manage our crops without considering the realities of farming, the state of the specific ground nor the specific needs of each piece of land.

On top of that, SB 1154 gives counties power to impose setbacks and other restrictions that could reduce how much land we can actually use for farming. It also bans new permits for large confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs) in certain areas, which sets a bad precedent for limiting agricultural activities based on location. Between losing farmland to projects like Muddy Creek and facing these new restrictions, it feels like Oregon is chipping away at agriculture piece by piece. EFU zoning was supposed to protect farmland for farming—not bury us under regulations or let industrial projects take over. I urge you to vote no on SB 1154 and focus on supporting farmers instead of making our work harder. Thank you for your time.