

FARMER TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 4153

TO: Chair and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture

FROM: Plumper Farms – Peter Kessinger

DATE: 2/3/2026

RE: Support for HB 4153 – Expanding Opportunity for Oregon’s Family Farms

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Peter Kessinger, and I own and operate Plumper Farms in Multnomah County with my father. Our farm is 65 acres, and we grow pumpkins, Christmas trees, hay, and livestock. We also invite the public to our farm every fall and Christmas season to sell our products and create a space where families can make memories. I am writing today to urge your support for HB 4153.

Running a small farm like ours requires diverse income streams – it is near impossible to survive with just farming alone. We do a lot more than just farm, and our farm store is the piece that makes it work. It allows us to welcome the public to our farm, sell some local products and host a range of events and activities that keep people coming back every year.

One of the attractions I am most proud of is our spring and fall field trips. We welcome thousands of kids to touch some dirt on a working farm and learn how pumpkins, apples, and Christmas trees grow. They then get to take that product home, knowing exactly where it was grown.

Under current law, we are inundated with rules that make it nearly impossible to operate a farm store like ours. I’ve heard horror stories of farms across Oregon having extreme rules imposed on them, and I live in fear that my county will do the same to me someday. That’s why we need the legal framework that HB 4153 provides.

A key example is the 25% income restriction on “incidental” items. Under current rules, revenue from things like admission sales or food is capped – even though that revenue directly supports our farming operation. The extra revenue allows us to pay for labor, upgrade our farm equipment, and invest in our farm land more than we could otherwise. Another example is the use of tents during our harvest festival, the public need shade or rain protection to get out of the weather, but it is legally risky to use them today.

HB 4153 also comes with "guardrails" that ensures **farms remain farming** – for example, it requires over half of the property to be farmed. By allowing farmers to do more with their land in conjunction with their farming operation it **protects both the farmers AND the farmland**.

Furthermore, I support this bill because it supports our local communities. No one wants a business to have a negative impact on their immediate community; that's why this bill still gives counties the authority over traffic management, parking plans, and noise. We are not asking for a "free-for all" – we are asking for an update to Oregon's land-use rules to create a fair and consistent way for us to keep farming in Oregon.

By passing HB 4153, you are giving small and medium farms, like mine, the confidence to keep farming for generations to come.

Please vote **YES** on HB 4153.

Sincerely,

Peter Kessinger

Plumper Farms

Portland, OR - Multnomah County