



Ag For Oregon

To: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Tuesday, February 3, 2026

RE: Opposition to HB 4153, the “Farm Stores” Bill

Co-Chairs Helm and Owens, esteemed members of the Committee:

Our organizations write to you to express our strong opposition to HB 4153, the bill that would change “farm stand” laws to “farm store”, dramatically reduce the amount of products and acreage dedicated to serving the store, and remove county review of farm stores for adverse impacts on neighboring farms. For these reasons and more, we urge you to vote no on this bill.

Two of our organizations served on the Farm Stand Rulemaking Advisory Committee that originally explored amendments to farm stand rules. All that was needed and all that the RAC was asked for was clarification around which permit to use for which use and for events. This bill far exceeds the charge of that RAC and the scope of the problem. Instead of addressing narrow, agreed upon, inconsistencies, it creates new conflicts and challenges for producers, making it more expensive for them to afford land and hazardous for them to farm. Below are some of the reasons why:

Our organizations work with farmers and ranchers across the state who use all types of marketing strategies, including direct marketing and farmstands. Direct market sales can help increase profit margins, build relationships with urban and rural customers, and be an important source of revenue. However, sideboards are needed on this marketing strategy in order for it not to harm neighboring agricultural operations, or the long-term viability of the agricultural property where commercial infrastructure is built.

Two of the most egregious provisions of this bill are that:

1. It allows 95% or more of store products to be retail merchandise and prepared food and beverages with no connection to the farm where the farm store is located, and
2. It allows as little as one acre of production from the associated farm that can seasonally serve the year round store.

This is not agritourism, this is non-farm commercial industry on farmland that takes advantage of low farm prices and inflates them for farmers who are trying to run an agricultural business. This loophole would be abused by individuals and businesses who are not farmers themselves, but who outcompete farmers for farm real estate in order to run a commercial operation on otherwise productive land. Instead farm stands (or stores) and other agritourism enterprises should be incidental and subordinate to the agricultural activity on the property.

Our organizations work directly with beginning farmers and ranchers around the state who tell us that the cost of agricultural land is the greatest barrier to long-term land tenure and economic success. Allowing what are essentially commercial uses on agricultural land will dramatically increase its appraised value, making it even more difficult for them to afford. And properties with expensive farm store infrastructure will be priced far beyond their reach.

This bill would also increase the amount of high-volume commercial activities on agricultural land, making it more dangerous for farmers to drive and move equipment on country roads, and increasing noise and trespassing from neighboring venues with increased events. This bill does not allow for counties to deny an application or even analyze it for impacts on neighboring agricultural operations.

We understand that the Oregon Department of Agriculture and Department of Land Conservation and Development drafted rules amendments that aligned with our shared priorities. Instead of changing the statute and opening up a massive loophole without sufficient public input, the legislature should leave the decision to expert agencies who have already invested a lot of time in coming to a shared solution.

For these reasons and more we ask the committee to vote no on this bill, to allow ODA and DLCDC to continue with their rule making.

Thank you for your consideration.

Nellie McAdams, Oregon Agricultural Trust
Mike McCarthy, Ag for Oregon
Addie Candib, American Farmland Trust
Jan Lee, Clackamas Soil & Water Conservation District, Advocacy Committee
Sarah Sullivan, Gorge Grown Food Network
Jan Lee, Oregon Association of Conservation Districts Advocacy Committee
Matt Gordon, Oregon Farm Corps
Amy Wong, Oregon Organic Coalition
Travis Williams, Willamette River Preservation Trust