

Submitter: Patricia Kirk
On Behalf Of: Patricia Ann Kirk
Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4153

Co-Chairs Helm and Owens, Vice-Chair Finger McDonald, and members of the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water:

My name is Patricia Ann Kirk, and I am a farmer, farm stand operator, and community member in Woodburn, Oregon. I am writing to express my opposition to HB 4153. Farm stands are a vital way to connect the public with our food system and to build real understanding of what it takes to go from field to fork. However, HB 4153 would restrict who is allowed to have a farm stand, replace existing protections with a new “farm store” structure, and grant expanded privileges to large landowners at the direct expense of small farms. We need a better and more equitable solution.

I care deeply about this issue because this bill discriminates against farmers like me who steward smaller acreages. My family’s farm is fourth generation. Our goal is to resume the kind of farm operations our grandparents once practiced and to pass this land on to our son. Like many small and beginning farmers, we already work off the farm to make this dream possible. HB 4153 makes that dream harder by imposing arbitrary acreage and income requirements and adding administrative burdens, fees, and permitting processes that small farms are least able to absorb.

Farm stands have always been a low-barrier, community-centered way for small farms to sell their own products, build trust, and sustain a farming livelihood. They allow farmers to create their own markets without having to compete with larger operations in wholesale or institutional systems. Under this bill, small farms face the highest burden of eligibility, while large acreage owners can qualify immediately and shift the primary purpose of a farm stand toward agritourism events rather than agricultural production. A small farm should not be considered less legitimate simply because it operates on fewer acres.

We are asking you not to place a higher burden on the smallest farms. HB 4153 takes away opportunities from small landholders so that larger operations can host more events. This is not a good bargain for Oregon’s agricultural future. Agriculture of all sizes deserves the opportunity to flourish, and seasonal small farm stands should remain an allowed use without burdensome oversight, permits, or punitive requirements.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Patricia Ann Kirk
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