

Submitter: Ashley Thompson

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4153

My Name is Ashley Thompson and I am a Farmer in Terrebonne, OR. I am writing to you today to express my opposition to HB 4153. Farm Stands are a vital part of connecting the public with our food system and building an understanding of what it takes to go from field to fork. But HB 4153 would restrict who is allowed to have a farm stand, replace current definitions with Farm Stores, and give large land owners privileges at the expense of small farm stands in Oregon. We need to find a better solution.

It is incredibly important that small and beginning farmers are able to set up and sell at farm stands. We run a highly productive market farm on 2.5 acres, on a piece of land that is only 5 acres in total. We are able to gross nearly \$400,000 in produce at this small scale, in our 7th year of business. My husband and I chose this method of farming because land is expensive and the more we can produce per acre, the easier it was to get started and we could build a profitable business with less investment. It is not only large landowners that produce a significant amount of food for the community, in fact we produce more food for our community on less land than the vast majority of large farms in our area.

We did not always produce this much, though, and many beginning farmers have to start out farming part time while holding other jobs that bring in a regular paycheck so that they can pay their mortgage. Farm stands are an important way that these farmers that are trying to get off the ground can get their business going and get their name out into the community. There are so many things one must get right to run a productive small farm, and farm stands offer the flexibility to sell what one has while not taking who is likely the only farm worker off the farm. They build a customer base off of which one could start a CSA program when they can reliably guarantee produce for a set amount of members. There are endless barriers to starting a farm and new farmers don't need another one. They need support as farmers are becoming fewer and older, and we must help new farmers begin- those who don't have family land to begin on and must start another way.

We are asking you to not have a higher burden on the smallest farms. This bill takes away opportunities from small land holders and farms in order for larger operations to be able to host more events. This is not a good bargain for Oregon and a better deal must be found.

Thank you,

Ashley Thompson
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