

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

Chair, Vice-Chairs, and members of the Committee,

My name is Courtney Bangs, Clatsop County Commissioner District 4 and small farm owner. I am sharing appreciation of your efforts to provide avenues for farm-direct sales and opening the door to farmers to have more rights in regards to how they utilize their land to increase their profits. Many small farms struggle to make a profit year to year in a world of increasing operational costs. I like the intent in this bill. However, I am requesting an further discussion to ensure this bill aligns with Oregon's existing Cottage Food and Home Baking Laws and clarity that this bill will not impact an entity from seeking a conditional use permit if they fall outside the descriptions read within the bill.

Farming in Oregon is becoming increasingly difficult. We need the flexibility this bill provides. For many, the ability to host educational tours, farm experiences, and offer prepared food is the difference between a profitable season and losing the family farm. I applaud the intent to create a 'durable framework' for these operations.

My concern lies in the potential conflict between the new 'Farm Store' requirements and our current Home Baking and Farm Direct Exemptions of farm stands. As currently drafted, the bill's acreage and income thresholds could inadvertently harm the very very small-scale producers that cottage laws were designed to protect.

I urge the committee to adopt an amendment that explicitly protects these. We must ensure that a farmer selling (for example) \$5,000 worth of jams or bread under a cottage food exemption isn't suddenly required to meet production minimums just to keep their roadside stand open. Let's protect and promote the 'Farm Store' without crushing the 'Farm Stand'. If that is already protected, then I request clarity to assuage concerns.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to Oregon agriculture. I strongly support the modernization of our farming land use rules allowing for more farmers rights to diversify funding streams, provided we don't leave our smallest producers behind.

Warmly,
Courtney Bangs

Clatsop County Commissioner District 4