

February 9, 2026

Submitter: Wendy Gray

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4153 Agriculture, Land Use and Natural Resources

Re: Opposition to HB 4153

Co-Chairs Rep. Ken Helms and Rep. Mark Owens, Vice-Chair Rep. Sarah McDonald and Members of the Committee:

I am adding to my earlier testimony. As a small cut flower grower, co-owner of orchard land, and resident in rural Hood River County, I value Oregon small farm stands and their connection to all Oregonians.

I oppose HB 4153 because:

- It violates Exclusive Farm Use (EFU) zoning in Oregon by using EFU land for “farm stores” and will easily begin the downhill slide to further commercialization of farmland.
- It stipulates that Oregon counties will have no say in the establishment of the “farm stores” and therefore they cannot assess the impact or require changes. It does not allow for local control regarding noise, traffic, safety concerns, lighting, or other issues.
- It does not include the “good neighbor” policy that is part of agritourism permits so there can be no alternative if the commercialization negatively affects farm neighbors.
- It allows for many non-farm uses including commercial and entertainment events, amusement parks, and commercial kitchens and again, with no local input or control.
- It undermines existing small businesses and restaurants that pay local taxes in small Oregon towns. It also forces small farm stands to compete with large stores which can carry up to 95% non-farm merchandise.
- It inevitably will drive up prices of farmland, challenging small farmers and potential new young farmers who will be competing with large farms, companies and corporations for farmland.

Oregon’s agriculture is the state’s second most economically successful industry. Under current law, **Oregon already allows farmstands, agritourism and value-added processing operations. These endeavors support farmers without turning farmland into non-farm commercial operations.**

The pressure from growing tourism, hospitality and entertainment industries, which want to locate in attractive rural areas, challenges our state with difficult decisions. We must protect these small businesses and our valuable rural areas or all Oregonians will lose.

Please vote No on HB 4153, this measure should not be rammed through in a short session without much more debate and public input.

Thank you,

Wendy Gray

Hood River County resident