

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

My name is Bonnie New, and I am a resident of Hood River County. Thank you for allowing me to comment on HB 4153. I urge you in the strongest possible way to vote no on this bill.

Hood River County is an intensely agricultural area, and one where developers and entrepreneurs are already frequently working to subvert our land use laws. Like HB 4153, their efforts are for their personal financial gain, at the expense of our farm land, our communities, and our residents.

I am not myself a farmer but am a member of an agricultural community. Consider if I own a small 10 acre plot in and have a handful of animals. In spite of my not being in the farming business, I would be able to take advantage of the provisions of HB 4153 to construct a 5000 ft.² so-called "farm store" selling various items, serving meals, and hosting events on my property. Now I am not only not a farmer, but in the eyes of my farming neighbors, not an asset in the community. The traffic in and out of my commercial operation is a nuisance on our small country roads, where farm vehicles and large trucks carrying produce to the packing houses are slowed down or blocked. The noise at my parties and wedding receptions disturb my neighbors. My farmer neighbors are now subject to more comments/complaints about what they accept as common features of farming - smells, sounds, spraying, operating equipment, etc.

Although I will now be regarded as a community nuisance, others will likely see my financial benefit and decide to build their own so-called "farm store" commercial operations. The adverse effects that my commercial venture brought to my community will be multiplied with each new commercial venture, eventually creating a synergistic effect that will transform this previous agricultural area irrevocably.

To each legislator who will be considering this bill: I challenge you to analyze the cost/benefit ratio for farming area residents of having these so called "farm store" commercial developments in our midst. The costs to our farming communities? Impeded agricultural productivity, loss of some of the most productive crop land in the country, growing scarcity of farming land, land too expensive for the next generation of would-be farmers, and loss of community. The benefits? Money. Enrichment. Not for the general good, not for the community, but for the few - the developers and entrepreneurs who have money to develop them in the first place.

This cost/benefit ratio is unacceptable and indefensible. I urge you again to vote no

on HB 4153.