

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

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 Nancy Faber and I am a community member in Springfield. I am writing to you today to express my opposition to HB 4153 as it is written and the -2 amendment. 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 as it is written 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.

I care about this because I have seen the positive effects that small farms have on communities, and how they in turn benefit from their connection with the community. For example the Youth Farm on Seavey Loop -- it has operated a produce stand and sells starts of assorted vegetable plants to the public, enabling the community to have locally grown produce either by purchase, or to grow themselves. Similar small operations contribute to the Fill Your Pantry event each year. Some of them are able to offer meat from livestock so that their customers can purchase food that has been treated humanely and benefitted from a free-range, organic diet. The health benefits from this are substantial, as are the moral benefits. Should these operations be prohibited from selling their products to the public as they have, both they and the community will suffer, as connections are disrupted and severed, and access to healthy, organic, humane food is taken away. Large, corporate owned operations frankly do not offer these benefits, and they cannot be relied upon to fill the void that would be left in the absence of smaller farms.

Why should large acreage farmers gain privileges at the expense of smaller acre farmers?

Why should a small farm be any less legitimate than a large farm when it comes to defining farm use?

Small farms need to have the same opportunities to sell their produce as larger farms. This is a vital need for the health of the local economy and of the people who make up the community around these farms. Our communities need food, not agritourism.

We are asking you to not set 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,

Nancy Faber
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