

Submitter: Wisteria Stuart
On Behalf Of: Grow Portland
Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4153

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 Wisteria Stuart and I am a Farm to School/Garden Educator in Portland, Oregon. I grew up in Oregon and have lived and farmed in several rural communities including Newport, Hood River/Parkdale, Roseburg and the Rogue Valley. 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 the importance of rural communities and agricultural land in Oregon. 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 and my family frequently go to farm stands in and around Portland and around the state that would not meet the acreage requirements in section 2.2 of the bill. Small farms need to have the same opportunities to sell their produce as larger farms, dividing economic opportunity according to acreage or size is not equitable nor does it encourage growth, it actually inhibits growth and is counterproductive to a diverse thriving Farm/Ag sector in the state. Small farms are a critical component of the Oregon agricultural landscape and limiting economic opportunity based on land size unnecessarily limits the economic landscape and does not incentivize growth and entrepreneurialism. It also limits and diminishes agricultural tourism which is a large and growing sector of the Oregon Ag economy, in other words small farmers & producers are as much a part of the Agritourism industry in Oregon as large producers and cutting them out harms everyone, locals (who like to shop and stop at those small stands), farmers who are just getting their start or trying out a new market sector (small farm stand) and visitors who come here for our diverse agricultural culture which includes large AND small producers.

Things I like about the bill:

- The inclusion of educational events (like farm tours, workshops, and speakers) in farm related fee based activity. This is part of helping people understand why supporting local agriculture is so important by helping them understand the impact of the choices farmers are making in production, distribution, conservation practices, and community participation.
- The clarification that products made under the farm direct producer processed

exemption are farm products, not incidental. A processed farm product is just made into a more usable form. Oregon has worked hard to provide the opportunity for our farmers to expand their offerings through the farm direct marketing law. These products should be included in the definition of farm products (and are often times what draw shoppers/visitors to make a farm purchase).

-Inclusion of farm to table dinners in fee based events. This is also something that farmers have identified as a priority but it's also a priority for locals providing much needed cultural and gathering opportunities in rural areas where other opportunities are rare, while attracting visitors. One caveat is that the bill does not currently require any of the food at the dinner be produced by the host farmer, only in the local agricultural area. I would like to see the bill stipulate that at least one ingredient come from the farm hosting the dinner.

I am asking you to reconsider this bill so that it does 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 (farmers/ranchers, locals or visitors!) and a better deal can and must be found.

Thank you,

Wisteria Stuart
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