

Submitter: Sheila Dooley

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4153

Co-Chairs Helm and Owens, Vice-Chair McDonald, and Committee Members,

Thank you for this opportunity comment. My name is Sheila Dooley and I am a resident of Mosier, Oregon.

Please oppose this irresponsible bill. The agenda for the meeting says it “allows” counties to approve farm stores when in reality it would “force” counties to permit them and other uses. This bill would include retail stores, events, amusement parks, and commercial kitchens, etc. in exclusive farm use zones.

There is already a path forward for allowing nonfarm uses on EFU when it makes sense. This bill’s blanket approval runs counter to Oregon’s land use laws, which the people of Oregon have overwhelmingly supported at the ballot box again and again when challenged.

The impact of a nonfarm use on the surrounding farms needs to be taken into account. A nonfarm use can negatively impact the ability of the surrounding farms to farm. This bill leaves out that important and necessary step.

Nonfarm uses drive up the cost of farm land, making it unaffordable for new farmers. Tourist destination syndicates could easily outbid farmers for small tracts of ag land (10-20 acres) in scenic areas such as the Hood River Valley.

The proponents of this bill complain that the current rules are vague, yet they’re the ones who used a campaign of misinformation to stop DLCD’s Rules Advisory Committee from making recommendations to clarify rules regarding farm stands and agritourism. These rules would have only applied to new farm stand permits and wouldn’t ban farm stands or any agritourism activities already allowed.

Please do not move this bill forward in this short session.

Thank you.

Sheila Dooley
Mosier, Oregon