

Submitter: Emma Harden

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4153

Hello,

My name is Emma Harden and I grew up on my family's small-scale goat farm outside of Eugene. I would like to express my opposition to HB 4153, as it is written, and the -2 amendment. I know from first hand experience the importance of farm-stands for all kinds of farms. They are an essential part of farm-direct sales and connecting the public to our local food system.

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 am afraid that this bill is yet another leg up for large-scale agriculture over small, community-oriented farms. We have seen a continuous decline of small farms over the years as big family farms engorge, consolidate, and, regrettably, sacrifice many aspects of authentic agricultural community connection. It is critical that small farms have the same opportunities as large-scale farms to distribute their produce to their neighbors, and it is critical for the health and culture of our Oregon communities that their access to small, local farm-stands be preserved. We cannot disguise a bill as "supporting family farmers" if it further restricts the produce sales of small farms based on acreage or income, instead prioritizing the agri-tourism events of larger landholders. Driving out to a hayride or corn-maze is not the same as taking your kids to purchase garden greens from a nearby farm-stand, chatting with the grower, meeting their livestock, and making a meaningful exchange. It is deeply problematic that this bill makes the latter obsolete, and further commodifies and alienates farming in Oregon. Agricultural income must come from the intentional production and sale of agricultural products, maintaining our farmland, our culture, and our communities. We must speak out against this favoring of events, tourism, and unrelated business ventures under the guise of farm support, and we must first and foremost protect our small farmers.

We are asking you to 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 and a better deal must be found.

Thank you,

Emma Harden
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