

Submitter: Grace Krogh

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 Finger McDonald, and members of the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water:

My Name is Grace and I am a farmer in Clackamas County. 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 the passing of this bill as it is currently written would put my own farm stand out of business. I cannot meet the acreage requirements stated in the bill, because I only own 3 acres of land and cultivate just a ½ acre of production. But this doesn't make my farm any less legitimate than one with 100 acres. My farm brings value to the community by providing products directly from us to our neighbors. I know that our community appreciates the ability to stop by a neighborhood stand on their way to or from school and work.

Aside from my farm, I am increasingly wary of any law that seeks to loosen farmland usage restrictions. Oregon has already lost an alarming amount of farmland to development, and I fear a bill like this could provide an opening for a developer or other land owner to challenge land use laws in court. I appreciate the desire for many farms to provide agritourism events and to diversify their offerings to the public. I think we can find a way to allow agritourism while also making sure farm stands are used for what they should be - farm products, not large concerts.

We are asking you to not place 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,

Grace Krogh
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