

Submitter: Rebecca Fallihee

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 Rebecca Fallihee and I am a community member and former board member of Willamette Farm & Food Coalition in Eugene. 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 frequently purchase farm goods from a farm stand that would not meet the acreage requirements in section 2.2 of the bill. Currently, I can travel just down the road to my nearby small farm, who happens to operate a farm stand to support farm sales throughout the growing season. As just one example, farmstand sales are the lifeblood of this farmer's profits. As it happens, the farmer is also a single mom, supporting her children from the profits of her small acreage. In vast contrast to the many employees and revenue streams from large farms, small farms need to have the same opportunities to sell their produce and farm goods. And, what is the threat that large farms face from "sales being taken away" by small farms? That really seems unlikely, or minimal. So why should large acreage farmers gain privileges at the expense of farmers who have less acres? Why should a small farm be any less legitimate than a large farm when it comes to defining farm use?

Additionally, should this bill become enacted, what does it mean to us as Oregonians to have less small farms being able to sell their products in a viable way with the resources they have, versus having large farms that can create big agritourism events, not the sale of farm products? Do we care more about "farm-entertainment" than actually living in connection with the land, its products, and its laborers? As written, that's what the current bill tells me.

I'm asking you to not place an even greater 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.

Kind regards,

Rebecca Fallihee  
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