

Submitter: Yianni Doulis
On Behalf Of: Wild Goose Farm
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 Yianni Doulis, and I live on Sauvie Island, on 5 acres of EFU land. I am writing today to offer my opposition to HB 4153 as it currently stands. The motivation for clarifying rules around farm stands is very timely, and I applaud the legislature for addressing the issue. However, though there are several concrete positive aspects to the bill, the mechanism by which small landowners and beginning farmers are excluded from the ability to market through the bill force me to oppose it as it stands.

Small farms, but particularly young beginning farmer/entrepreneurs, are crucial to innovation and diversity in our food system. Particularly close to metro Portland, land costs and development pressure mean that it is hard to acquire land for growing, and difficult to make the economics work without a diverse income stream. Putting an income threshold on farms smaller than 20 acres, while not imposing the same income threshold on large landowners, disproportionately burdens these small farmers. At the same time, it allows large farms to provide unlimited agri-tourism opportunities while only nominally farming their large acreage, and allows them to do so immediately, while small farms would have to demonstrate income for two years before being allowed to diversify.

I urge you to consider the framework of revisions that the Friends of Family Farmers has outlined in your deliberations, and keep the positive aspects of this bill while providing small landowners with the same opportunities for diverse farm-based income as large farmers.

Thank you,

Yianni Doulis