

Submitter: Camille Hall
On Behalf Of: local food producers and consumers
Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural
Resources, and Water
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4153

Dear Members of the Committee,

I strongly oppose the amended HB 4153 as currently written. I support the comments sent to you by the Oregon State Grange and Friends of Family Farmers. I urge you to revise House Bill 4153, known as the Farm Store Bill, to authorize the operation of small farm stands without permits, as was legitimized under the current legislation. HB 4153 threatens small farm stands which are the backbone of agricultural communities all over the state. These are the farm stands that used to operate comfortably under the old legislation

When a farm or cooperative group of small farmers sells only their own product, or has a u-pick or u-cut operation, no permit should be necessary. Truly small farmers cannot afford the time or money to apply for a permit and yet they are essential to efficient local food and agricultural products. In Benton County, the countryside is dotted with farm stands selling their own products and those of other small farmers. This bill replaces the law which allows this type of farm stand, with a permit system that does not specifically address their needs. Small farmers need specific protection in this legislation to allow them to operate without permits and to ensure that legal status into the future.

Current law restricts total fee-based income (ticket sales) and incidental item sales to 25% of the revenue from the farm stand. This bill removes that requirement rather than reworking it into HB 4153 to allow incidental operations on small farms. HB 4153 helps maintain medium and large agricultural operations which should require permits, but it abandons the small farmer, rather than including protections in the law to allow functions, including farm stays, that provide income essential to the survival of small farms.

I urge the committee to reconsider this legislation and to protect the rights and opportunities of small farmers and the communities they serve.

Thank you.

Camille Hall
Marys River Grange member