

NO ON HB 4153-A

HB 4153-A goes too far in allowing commercial development on farmland and I urge my fellow Senators to reject it.

Oregon's world-class farmlands are the backbone of our economy, facilitating the number two industry in the state. According to the Oregon Department of Agriculture, our farmlands produce more than \$6.8 billion in agricultural commodities annually.

HB 4153-A could make nonfarm retail stores and commercial activities the primary use of farmland instead of farming. The bill was crafted by special interests behind closed doors with little input from farmers. Over 70% of submitted testimony is opposed to this bill, yet the bill was referred to Ways & Means without any policy consideration in the Senate.

Stakeholders representing farmers across the state, including Friends of Family Farmers and Agriculture for Oregon, oppose this bill, as do many individual farmers.

- A reasonable alternative was crafted and put before the House Agriculture Committee as the -6, but it was not even heard or discussed. The -6 amendment would allow the new "farm store" use, but would impose a "good neighbor" standard to ensure these new stores do not significantly impact neighboring farm operations.
- HB 4153-A would allow new buildings up to 10,000 square feet and large parking lots to pave over precious farmland. These new "farm stores" only need to sell a nominal or de minimis amount of actual farm products. Otherwise they can be mini-marts - or any other type of retail store - on land zoned for farming.
- Counties will be powerless to enforce any local considerations, as the bill prevents them from applying any "siting standards in a manner that prohibits the siting and operation of a farm store[.]" (HB 4153- A, Section 2(7)(b))
- Walking back or amending any portion of the bill in future sessions is extremely unlikely as Measure 56 (ORS 197.047) would likely require the state to mail paper notice of any revisions to every farmland owner in the state, costing upwards of \$1 million.
- The significant expansion of nonfarm retail sales and commercial activities on farmland allowed by HB 4153-A needs greater consideration than this short legislative session can, or has, allowed.

When it comes to our exceptional natural resources, good policy requires good process. HB 4153-A was rushed through the short session and is opposed by most stakeholders. Please join me in voting NO on HB 4153-A

