



February 2, 2026

Members of the House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water:

HB 4153 would require counties to permit a huge range of non-farm commercial uses on land zoned for Exclusive Farm Use. It is unprecedented, unreasonable, and unnecessary.

THE REALITY

Here's what HB 4153 forces counties to permit on agricultural land.

1. *Retail stores of any kind* (section 2(3)(b)). The items sold needn't have anything to do with farming. There is no limit on sales, and the square footage provision in the bill will simply encourage stores with higher dollar items. Imagine sports gear, clothing, electronics, jewelry – *any kind of retail store* – sprayed across the farm zone.
2. *Any activity* that promotes visitor traffic and sales at the retail store (section 2(1)(a)(A)). The sky's the limit.
3. *Commercial and entertainment events of any kind* (section 2(1)(a)(A)(viii)). Festivals, concerts, corporate retreats, private events – again, unlimited commercial uses.
4. *Meal service* that “educates the public” (section 2(1)(b)). This is one of numerous nebulous terms in the bill that would spawn years of court cases.
5. *Amusement parks* (section 2(1)(a)(A)(iv)).
6. *Sales of food and beverages ready for immediate consumption* (section 2(3)(c)). 7-Eleven convenience stores on farmland.
7. *Commercial kitchens* for the preparation of any of the prepared food items above (section 2(4)). Light manufacturing on farmland.

THE ILLUSION

The current farm stand statute maintains a connection to agriculture by requiring that structures be used for the sale of farm crops and livestock, and limiting other sales to 25% of the total. HB 4153 obliterates those safeguards. Stores could be established by offering a “farm product” without regard to the nature or quantity. A couple pints of blueberries for three weeks will do. The acreage provisions are meaningless; a minimally maintained hay field or a swath of timber to be harvested in 30 years will suffice. HB 4153 requires counties to permit stores on farm land, not farm stores.

STATE OVERREACH

Currently, farm stand operators can do everything they've always done for over 25 years. This bill is totally unnecessary. More importantly, it is unwarranted state overreach. The bill digest says that it "Allows counties to approve farm stores". It does not allow, it **forces**. It inserts all the commercial and manufacturing uses detailed above into ORS 215.283 subsection (1), where counties **must** permit them, regardless of the impacts to local farmers and communities. Currently, for example, counties may – but are not required to – allow events beyond the generous provisions already in the farm stand statute, using a simple annual permit. Hood River County has chosen to allow up to 18 days of agri-tourism events, but not the larger number available in statute, and no commercial events. ***This is the county's right and choice under current law.*** It is the balance between tourism and farm land protection that fits Hood River. That local prerogative will be taken away by this bill.

CONCLUSION

There are innumerable entertainment and retail conglomerates just waiting for a bill like this to buy up Oregon's farm land and plaster it with urban uses and sprawl. Oregonians support the land use system because we don't want Oregon to become Florida or Texas. Please stop this bill.

Respectfully,



Chris Robuck, Co-President
and the Board of Thrive Hood River