

Submitter: Sid Friedman

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4153

My wife and I have a hay & timber operation in Yamhill County's coast range foothills. I also served two terms on the Yamhill County Planning Commission. Last year, I participated in both Senator Helm's agritourism work group and on LCDC's Farm Stand Rulemaking Advisory Committee. HB 4153 is a disaster for the future of both our farm industry and our small towns. We strongly oppose it.

Legitimate farm stands and direct to consumer sales are an important part of our local farm economy and are already permitted outright. That is NOT what this bill is about. This bill is about blowing up the guardrails that keep retail stores in our small towns and protect farmland for farming.

The bill allows unlimited sales of retail items without any required connection to a farm crop, and unlimited tourism events with no regard for whether or not they are subordinate to the farm operation. This goes way beyond what is permitted at wineries.

Under the terms of this bill, an out-of-state corporation could lease 10 acres at a dozen different freeway interchanges and open a chain of "dollar farm stores." So long as they had a basket of lavender sprigs for sale at the register, grown at a lavender patch that is part of their "operation," they could:

* sell unlimited amounts of Franz bread, Tillamook cheese, Kettle Chips, and Ninkasi beer to highway travelers; all as "local processed farm products."

AND:

* Sell unlimited amounts of soda-pop, candy bars, cigarettes, toilet paper, or any retail item whatsoever, so long as the floor space did not exceed 25% of the total building size.

The pressure from commercial uses significantly pushes up price of farmland, making it more difficult to acquire, more difficult to pencil-out for farming and in many areas its cumulative impacts threaten the overall stability of our rural land base.

And the continued proliferation of commercial uses scattered in rural areas sap the vitality out of our small towns where they belong and where the infrastructure already exists and they unfairly compete with in-town business that pay city taxes.

Please oppose HB 4153. Oregon's agricultural industry and our small towns have both prospered because of our land use laws. Please continue to protect them.