

Written Testimony in Support of HB 4153
Oregon State Legislature

Submitted by: Aaron Allison
Location: Sauvie Island, Multnomah County, Oregon
Position: Small Farm Owner
Bill: HB 4153

Chair, Vice-Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Aaron Allison, and I am a small farm owner on Sauvie Island. I am writing in strong support of HB 4153.

Sauvie Island is one of Oregon's most visible and valuable agricultural areas. It is close to Portland, heavily regulated, and deeply impacted by land-use rules that were written decades ago—long before the realities small farms face today. While the public increasingly expects farms like mine to provide food, education, family-friendly experiences, and community engagement, the regulatory framework has not kept up.

HB 4153 is not about changing what farmland is — it is about giving farms a clear, lawful path to survive.

The Reality of Owning a Small Farm Today

Running a small farm in Oregon today is not just about growing crops. We face rising labor costs, rising insurance costs, increasing compliance and permitting expenses, property taxes, infrastructure costs, weather volatility, and thin margins that leave no room for error.

At the same time, current land-use rules make it unnecessarily risky to diversify income in ways that the public actively wants and supports.

The Problem With the Current System

Today's rules are unclear, inconsistent between counties, and outdated. They penalize farms that try to diversify responsibly, create fear of complaints and enforcement, discourage investment in safety and infrastructure, and favor only the largest operations that can afford legal teams.

Why HB 4153 Matters

HB 4153 provides clarity and certainty. It allows counties to approve farm stores and agritourism uses while preserving local authority over traffic, parking, noise, and public safety. It modernizes oversight without removing it.

Closing

As a Sauvie Island farmer, I want to farm responsibly, welcome the public safely, comply with local rules, and pass this land on better than I found it.

HB 4153 gives farmers like me the clarity and flexibility we need to survive — without sacrificing Oregon's land-use values.

I respectfully urge your support.