

Submitter: Aaron Cooke

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4153

Co-Chairs Helm, Owens and Committee Members

I am writing this testimony in opposition to HB 4153. This bill threatens to industrialize farmland and compromise our working lands. These regulations would allow significant acreage to be utilized for non-agricultural production. Further, some of these allowable uses have no connection to the farm use these lands are EXCLUSIVELY reserved for. They also may likely cause increased conflicts with neighbors participating with actual farm use such as seeding, watering, fertilization, or harvest during events such as weddings, or concerts.

This bill is a tool for speculators to exploit our land system and create event venues on lands as small as 11-12 acres as long as 10 are farm use. These smaller parcels of 40 acres or less are often intermixed with residential lands adding to the disruption of those living near the parcels. Many counties do not even have noise ordinances to curtail some of the more egregious uses proposed in the bill. Likely the most chilling effect will be the increased difficulty of young farmers finding opportunities to buy working lands. With additional pressures from speculators seeking pastoral event venues driving up the cost few future farmers, or those looking to expand their opportunities will be able to.

Oregon already has ample avenues to expand uses on EFU lands and this bill significantly undermines the core values of our land use. It has numerous issues that can not be addressed in a short session. It is irresponsible to move this forward and should be opposed. I am asking the committee to vote no on HB 4153.