

Submitter: Kermit McCarthy

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4153

I oppose HB 4153

In the early 70s my wife and I participated in workshops put on by the legislature to give input on how to conserve Oregon's forests, farmland and scenic beauty. The meetings were held statewide and the outcome was Senate Bill 100 and the current land use rules. These rules were not promulgated by a small group of politicians and lobbyists in Salem, but by many people throughout the state. These rules have formed compact population centers and maintain farmland and forest land throughout the state. This has reduced Oregon's carbon footprint by reducing transportation needs.

Since that time over 60 changes have been made to these rules. Almost all the changes weaken the ability to conserve forests, farmland and scenic beauty. Adding "Farm Stores" as outlined in HB 4153 will be another change that makes it harder to conserve forests, farmland and scenic beauty. It will increase Oregon's carbon footprint by putting commercial areas far from population centers.

Transportation needs will increase as these "Farm Stores" are built, maintained, stocked, staffed, and as people drive their Sprinter vans and SUVs out into rural areas to buy things they can get in the city. This is ironic as farmers are currently being pressured to reduce their carbon footprint, but this bill will increase it.

Placing commercial entities outlined in HB 4153 on farmland increases the value of the land pricing farmers out of the agricultural land market. Placing these commercial entities near other farms increases the potential of conflicts between farm activities that produce noise, dust, generate odors from livestock, and use pesticides. And increased traffic will conflict with agriculture equipment on the roads. This all makes it harder for farmers to farm.

Many small, rural towns in Oregon are struggling and have empty store fronts in commercial zones. These are ideal for use as "Farm Stores" and are zoned for that use.

This bill not help the vast majority of Oregonians as taking the time and money to drive out into the country and buy things they can buy in the city is not something they will be able to do.

Rather than coming up with ideas for farmers to not farm their land it would better for the legislature to work on helping farmers farm.

Kermit McCarthy