

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing in strong support of HB4153.

I was born and raised in Oregon, raised my own children here, and continue to call Oregon home. Some of my earliest memories are of visiting pumpkin patches and cutting down Christmas trees at family farms in the 1960s and 1970s. Those experiences stayed with me—and decades later, I was grateful to pass them on to my children.

Going to a farm is a magical experience for a child. My daughters grew up visiting Lee Farms in Tualatin. I still have photos of them in overalls picking out pumpkins, petting goats, and later navigating corn mazes on Sauvie Island. Lee Farms is the last working farm—family-owned or otherwise—within Tualatin city limits. Like so many Oregon families, we also took school field trips to farms, where our children learned about food, land stewardship, and life beyond the suburbs.

Family farms offer something essential, especially at a time when so many Oregonians need opportunities to slow down, relax, and heal. They allow us to unplug, smell the earth, and reconnect with where our food comes from. Farm stands across Oregon provide local food that is a completely different sensory and nutritional experience than produce shipped in from large national chains. Through farms like Topaz Farm on Sauvie Island, I have learned to buy local and eat seasonally—and as a result, I waste far less and value my food far more than I ever expected to.

Family farms are an Oregon treasure. They should be encouraged and supported—not burdened by prohibitive permitting costs, arbitrary penalties, or unnecessary regulatory barriers.

Why are we not doing everything possible to protect and sustain small family farms in Oregon?

I strongly and enthusiastically support the passage of HB4153. Please help Oregon's family farms continue to thrive so that future generations can remain connected to this place we proudly call home.

Sincerely,
Maggie O'Connor