

TO: Chair and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture

FROM: Laura and Keith Middleton

DATE: 2/3/2026

RE: Support for HB 4153 – Protecting Oregon’s Farm Experiences

Chair and Members of the Committee,

Our names are Keith and Laura Middleton, and we currently reside in Monroe Michigan. We previously owned and operated a 500-acre farm in Bend, Oregon. **BY PASSING THIS BILL**

IT WILL ABSOLUTELY SAVE 100'S OF FARMS!!! I am writing today to express my strong support for HB 4153. We are farmers, and I believe this bill is essential for preserving the rural experiences along with preserving the family farms that many love so deeply.

Preserving farms is essential for ensuring a sustainable food supply. Farmstands allow farmers to sell directly to consumers, fostering community connections and transparency in food sourcing. They also serve as platforms for educating the public about local agriculture and sustainable practices.

Agriculture is a major industry, creating numerous jobs in farming and related sectors. Farms also contribute more in property taxes than they consume in public services.

Farmstands often reflect local traditions and agricultural practices, preserving the cultural heritage of farming communities. They can also help new farmers establish their businesses and connect with local consumers, ensuring the continuation of farming practices.

Preserving farms and utilizing farmstands not only supports local economies but also enhances community ties and environmental health.

For many families, visiting a local farm like Packer Orchards, Topaz, Plumper Farms, along with many other farms located along the Hood River Fruit Loop and across the state it's about much more than just picking up a bag of apples or a pumpkin. It is where children or adults learn that food doesn't just come from a grocery store shelf—it comes from the hard work of our neighbors. These farms provide educational classes, hayrides, and seasonal traditions that connect us to Oregon's agricultural roots.

I support HB 4153 because it brings common sense back to the farm zone. It ensures that the farms we love can stay in business by selling their products directly to us and providing the fun, educational experiences we enjoy.

This bill is the way to go to have consistent laws across the state and eliminate the current county by county variations.

I also appreciate that this bill includes strict guardrails. As a member of the public, I want to see our farmland protected, and HB 4153 does that by requiring active farming on the property and setting strict size limits on buildings. Farms are required to address parking issues, traffic issues, and noise considerations.

Farms shouldn't have to spend huge sums on lawyers to host a harvest festival or to visit with Santa. Please support HB 4153 so that families can continue to enjoy and support Oregon's working farms for years to come.

If this bill is passed farmers like us would consider returning to the state of Oregon!

Sincerely,

Keith and Laura Middleton (Monroe, Michigan)