

Submitter: Linda de Boer

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4153

Please oppose HB 4153 which allows large farm stores and increased non-agricultural activity in exclusive farm use zones.

Some of the misunderstandings and complications on the subject of farm stands came to light during the farm stand Rules Advisory Committee meetings during the summer of 2025. As a resident of a rural area who has experienced conflict between farming and non-farm interests, I listened carefully to these sessions. Towards the end of the RAC there was a flurry of social media posts that were loaded with misinformation and caused some panic. Many people had to be reassured that Oregon has always allowed and encouraged farmers to sell directly to consumers on their properties.

Farm stands are not only allowed in Oregon, they thrive. Yes, permits are needed for the large farm stands and ensuing events. Some counties add in agritourism as a vehicle for event permits. The purpose of these permits has been to ensure safety, protect neighbors (especially their farming rights), and to make sure that the non-farm income and activities are ancillary to the agricultural endeavors. Fleshing out these rules, which can vary per county, is indeed a complicated task. But it cannot be short-changed by allowing a free for all.

Counties need to be able to require an assessment of impacts of non-farm activities on the rural community. This bill eliminates that. Our Washington County area has experienced commercial wedding and event centers that have interfered with farm activities. Heavy traffic interfered with horses and sheep crossing the road and hindered the moving of tractors, combines and other farm equipment from field to field. Amplified music and other noise bothered animals, including humans. It took neighbors considerable time and expense to stop these activities through county hearings and LUBA, but we eventually succeeded.

Now our area is left with wonderful CSA's, farm stands, and wineries who are good neighbors and stewards of the land, all situated among dairies and acres of clover, grains, and pasture. Citizens and county employees need help to achieve these goals, not the elimination of rules and protections designed to keep farms thriving.

Please oppose HB 4153, and continue our state's thoughtful approach to limiting commercial activity in the EFU.



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