

Submitter: Robby Rutledge

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4153

Dear [Legislator / Commissioner / Decision Maker],

I am writing in strong support of House Bill 4153 and its intent to provide farms with practical, sustainable tools to remain economically viable while keeping land in agricultural production.

The reality is that for most family farms, farming alone no longer pays the bills. Input costs continue to rise, margins are razor thin, and one failed crop due to weather, pests, or market conditions can be the difference between surviving another season or being forced to shut down. Expecting farms to operate indefinitely at or near break-even is not realistic, nor is it a recipe for preserving farmland for future generations.

HB 4153 recognizes an important truth: allowing carefully limited farm stores and agri-tourism activities does not take land out of farming—it helps keep it there. By creating modest, farm-connected revenue opportunities, this bill gives farmers a way to diversify income while still prioritizing agricultural use. These additional revenue streams can be the deciding factor that allows a farm to stay intact rather than being sold, subdivided, or converted to non-agricultural development.

This legislation is not about turning farmland into commercial districts. It includes clear size limits, use restrictions, and local oversight to ensure that farm stores and activities remain subordinate to farm operations. What it does do is acknowledge that modern farming requires flexibility to adapt to economic realities.

If we truly want to preserve farmland, support family farms, and ensure that agriculture can be passed on to the next generation, we must support policies like HB 4153. Giving farmers the ability to earn a living wage from their land is one of the most effective farmland preservation tools we have.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and continued support of Oregon's agricultural community.

Sincerely

Robby Rutledge

Farmer