

Submitter: Kate Perle
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4153

Co-Chairs Helm and Owens, Vice-Chair Finger McDonald, and members of the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water:

My name is Kate Perle and I am a farmer and farmstand operator in Eugene Or.. I am writing to you today to express my opposition to HB 4153. Farm stands are a vital part of connecting the public with our food system and building an understanding of what it takes to go from field to fork. But HB 4153 would restrict who is allowed to have a farm stand, replace current definitions with Farm Stores, and give large land owners privileges at the expense of small farm stands in Oregon. We need to find a better solution.

I have been farming on the same piece of land just outside the urban growth boundary for the last 29 years. I operate a fully diversified operation with tiny scale dairy, eggs, vegetables, fruits, starts in season, and some farm direct processed foods. My entire income is derived from my year around farmstand. This would not meet the acreage requirements or the income requirements for being a farmstand. I know that the relationships I have fostered with my community over these decades have been a significant learning experience for these customers. Their connection to their food, its provenance, the welfare of those growing it and the ancillary benefits of keeping farmland in farming instead of speculative purchase for future urban expansion is priceless.

Indeed, the inequities of the bill as written are stark. 100 percent of my upland area is dedicated to a kind of farming that is sustainable, regenerative and supports a healthy neighborhood. I can not say the same for the large farms in my area who run farm stores, import most of their product, and practice an extractive form of agriculture. Smaller farms are the future-human scaled work done by humans to nourish other humans is what we need to support. The climate impacts and the decline of soil health from the way large farms operate are clear signs that their time is limited.

Yes, events can create an added value to a farm, but they must be an incidental part of the equation. Creating pretend farms that don't actually produce the products to support the agritourism is disingenuous and creates the illusion that the work being done is in the service of an actual agri-culture.

We are asking you to not have a higher burden on the smallest farms. This bill takes away opportunities from small land holders and farms in order for larger operations to be able to host more events. This is not an equitable tradeoff for those of us doing

the hard work of making a living in small but profound ways.

Thank you,
Kate Perle
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