

Submitter: Eilidh Lowery

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4153

My life has been made infinitely better by access to Topaz Farm. I grew up visiting my grandparents' farm and getting to interact with animals and rural life in a safe supportive space. I am so grateful that my daughter was able to grow up in Oregon learning the same kinds of things, now that my family no longer owns their own land. Learning about agriculture, enjoying the fruits of nature, even understanding that lambs grow up to be really good dinners has helped my entire family to better appreciate Oregon and to really understand where our food comes from and the importance of farms. Having a place to listen to music, see green vistas, and just come out with my friend's kids for a pumpkin ground us in the values that founded Oregon. Being able to engage in rural spaces is invaluable to folks who live in the city. Spending time at farms is an essential part of the Oregon identity alongside skiing in Bend, hiking the gorge, seeing plays in Ashland, watching tides at the coast, and taking in the art of the city. Our farm land brought people here from across the country and I am so grateful that we have law makers acting to increase access to this land for all Oregonians. The more we are connected to the different landscapes of our state, the more we understand about agriculture, the cycles of nature, and community the better we are as a state. Topaz is my favorite place, there I get to sit under a tree and simply be, eat something grown right there on the land, and watch the community form and connect around me. Something in my soul eases when I get to return to a farm, so like the one where my grandparents lived. As we've lost family farms agrotourism is one of the only ways for families like mine to touch our roots and teach our children the importance of a connection to the land and the knowledge of place. Please support this bill that strengthens Oregon's farms and allows access for all people to enjoy and learn from our farm land, rather than just letting large farms and wealthy land owners control.