

Submitter: Dan Lawrence

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4153

As the owner of a farm and agritourism business, I am well acquainted with the challenges farmers face when establishing businesses open to the public on EFU land, as well as with the purpose and role of EFU zoning in protecting farmland, family farms, and rural communities. I oppose HB 4153 because it undermines the intent of the EFU zoning district, and because a clear mechanism for establishing a farm store already exists through the conditional land use process.

EFU zoning exists to protect farmland and preserve the peace and beauty inherent in the countryside. This bill would allow individuals with agricultural production to establish a broad range of commercial activities, many of which may be unrelated to farming, with minimal regulatory oversight. More importantly, it would eliminate the ability of neighboring landowners to provide input on the establishment of potentially disruptive commercial uses near their homes and operations. I am also concerned that passage of this bill would contribute to the decline of family farms and accelerate the corporatization of rural areas. The conditional land use process encourages good neighbor relations and allows neighbors and local governments to review non-farm uses on a case-by-case basis and approve them accordingly. Please protect our farms and vote no on HB 4153.

Thank you,

Dan Lawrence
Owner/Farmer
Stone Circle Cider