

February 4th 2026

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Amy Bennett. I'm a Portland resident, a small business owner, and I own/manage commercial property in Multnomah County. I'm submitting testimony on HB 4153.

I value Oregon's Urban Growth Boundary and the land use system that protects it. As a city resident, I rely on the UGB to preserve rural lands in the spirit in which it was created, and I care deeply about small, local, and family farms and I want farms to thrive. My concern is that HB 4153 expands "farm store" uses in a way that resemble urban retail and event venues creating a form of Urban Growth Boundary creep - where urban-style commercial activity gradually normalizes outside the boundary, even if each individual project looks modest.

I'm also concerned about fairness. Portland commercial property owners pay full commercial property taxes for retail and event-related uses. EFU properties may receive farm-use special assessment intended to support land that is primarily agricultural. If HB 4153 makes it easier for larger retail and event-style operations to occur on EFU land while the property continues to benefit from lower farm-use taxation (even partially), that creates an uneven playing field for businesses inside the city, and it undermines trust in the purpose of EFU protections.

Finally, I'm concerned about Sauvie Island livability and basic capacity. There is essentially one main way on and off the island, and traffic is already a real problem at peak times. Expanding destination-style uses will predictably increase vehicle trips and congestion, with ongoing effects for residents, emergency access, and neighboring farms trying to do actual farm work. As written, HB 4153 appears to increase these impacts while offering very limited practical recourse for nearby residents and farms to meaningfully shape or limit the traffic and quality-of-life effects.

HB 4153 is a land-use bill, not a tax bill, so it does not clearly address how property tax treatment should work when farm operations expand into substantial commercial uses. I urge you to add stronger, enforceable guardrails so "farm-first" remains the standard, and to ensure commercial footprints (store, parking, event areas, food service areas) are clearly treated as non-farm use for assessment purposes so we can support farm viability without eroding the UGB, creating a two-tier tax system for similar commercial activity, or degrading livability for the Sauvie Island community.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Amy Bennett  
Portland, Oregon