

Submitter: Meredith Diskin

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4153

My Name is Meredith Diskin and I am a citizen residing in Eugene. 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 care about this because farm stands provide an accessible pathway for citizens to learn about local farms while giving farms a direct way to engage with their surrounding community. They have represented direct agriculture in a way that is missing from most individual's understanding of the broader food system. Farm stands allow beginning and seasoned small farmers to carve a niche for themselves without having to compete with larger farms in forums like wholesale markets, institutional sales, or even farmers markets where their share of the profits is lessened. Very small farms are drawn to farm stand sales because they are creating their own market and build trust with their community. They also represent an opportunity for the community to gain insight into local agricultural practices while building lasting relationships that strengthen the local food system. They are also a boon to folks who are scaling their businesses, have to maintain off farm income to continue their health coverage or pay their bills, are only selling a little over their subsistence production or who simply want to pay the costs of doing the conservation work on their own farm. This bill tells all those farms that what they are doing is invalid and not as important as farms who are able to scale production to a certain arbitrary level. We are taking opportunities away from small farms with this bill.

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 a good bargain for Oregon and a better deal must be found.

Thank you,

Meredith Diskin
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