

Submitter: Christopher Peters

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4153

Written Testimony on HB 4153 — Farm Store Bill

Bearfox Farms LLC

Elsie, Oregon

House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Hearing Date: February 4, 2026

Dear Chair, Vice-Chair, and Committee Members,

I am writing in opposition to HB 4153 because it directly harms small, working family farms like ours by imposing an income threshold that is unrealistic and exclusionary for farms on Exclusive Farm Use (EFU) land.

I have been farming this property since 2018. Bearfox Farms LLC is a diversified small farm operating on approximately 10 acres, much of which is not well suited for intensive crop production. Due to EFU zoning, our land may only be used for farming and farm-related activities. We fully accept that restriction and have structured our livelihood around it.

What we cannot accept is being told that we may only farm our land, while simultaneously being restricted from the very tools needed to make farming financially viable.

HB 4153 introduces a minimum income requirement of \$40,000 in annual farm sales in order to qualify for expanded farm store or farm-related sales activity. For a small farm like ours, that threshold is not achievable through production alone, especially during establishment years. We are nowhere near \$40,000 in annual farm income, despite actively farming this land for over six years.

The only realistic path to reaching that level of income is through direct-to-consumer sales, on-farm sales events, and future u-pick opportunities. These are not side businesses. They are essential agricultural income strategies for small acreage farms that do not have the scale to compete in wholesale markets.

Under HB 4153, we are effectively locked out. We cannot reach the income threshold without on-farm sales, but we cannot expand on-farm sales unless we already meet the income threshold. This creates a circular barrier that permanently disadvantages small farms while allowing larger operations to qualify immediately.

This structure favors scale over stewardship. Larger farms with more acreage can meet income requirements simply by volume, even if only a small portion of their land is actively farmed. Meanwhile, small farms that are intensively managed, community-focused, and fully compliant with EFU rules are excluded.

We are planning future u-pick orchard production, seasonal farm sales, and limited agritourism activities that directly support farm income and long-term land stewardship. These uses are consistent with agriculture, preserve working farmland, and keep small farms economically viable.

If the state requires farmers to use EFU land only for agriculture, then the state must also allow farmers equitable access to agricultural income. HB 4153, as written, fails that test.

I respectfully urge the committee to reject HB 4153 or amend it to remove minimum income thresholds, protect small-acreage farms, and preserve direct-to-consumer farm sales as a legitimate agricultural use on EFU land.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Christopher Peters

Bearfox Farms LLC

Elsie, Oregon