

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

Re: Support for HB 4153 — Clarifying Farm Store Regulations and Supporting Working Lands

Dear Co-Chair Helm and Owens, Vice Chair Finger McDonald and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of **House Bill 4153**, a thoughtful, bipartisan measure that brings much-needed clarity and fairness to Oregon's farm store laws while continuing to protect our state's valuable farm and forest lands.

HB 4153 represents a **balanced, common-sense approach supported by voices across the political spectrum** who recognize that Oregon's family farms must be allowed to adapt in order to survive. This bill does not weaken land-use protections; instead, it modernizes them by clearly defining what is allowed, reducing uncertainty for farmers and counties alike, and ensuring consistent application of the law statewide.

One of the most important benefits of HB 4153 is that it **clarifies how counties regulate farm stores**. Under the current system, vague definitions and outdated rules have led to inconsistent enforcement, confusion, and unnecessary conflict between farmers and local governments. HB 4153 provides clear standards—based on acreage, building size, and active agricultural use—so counties can regulate fairly and predictably, and farmers can operate with confidence rather than fear of shifting interpretations.

This legislation also strengthens Oregon's **rich heritage of agriculture and forestry**, two cornerstones of our state's economy, culture, and identity. Farm stores, educational activities, and modest on-farm experiences help connect Oregonians to the working lands that feed us and steward our natural resources. By supporting these activities, HB 4153 helps ensure that farms remain economically viable and that agricultural and forest lands stay in production for future generations.

Importantly, the bill maintains strong guardrails:

- A majority of the property must remain in active agricultural use
- Farm store buildings are size-limited
- Unrelated commercial uses such as hotels, chain restaurants, or drive-throughs remain prohibited

- Counties retain authority to address impacts like traffic, noise, and hours of operation

HB 4153 is not about commercialization—it is about **keeping farms farming**. By removing unnecessary barriers and providing clear rules, this bipartisan bill supports family farmers, rural communities, and local governments while preserving the land-use values that make Oregon unique.

I respectfully urge you to support HB 4153 and help move this important legislation forward.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Jake Pelroy