

Submitter: Scott Smith

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4153

My Name is Scott Smith and I am a small farmer in Lebanon. I am writing to you today to express my opposition to HB 4153.

I farm a very small plot of only about 3500sq ft. I grow a variety of vegetables which varies from year to year and I produce a number of different value added products from them. The batches can be quite small as are the profits. Setting minimum income requirements to even qualify to apply for a farm stand permit is a slap in the face of every beginning farmer. 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 HB 4153 as written is in direct opposition to what farm stands have always traditionally been, a way for farmers to market their farm products to their community without having to produce wholesale quantities.

Large landowners already have huge advantages in the market. Land may be collateralized to purchase more land which leaves less opportunity for beginning farmers to even attempt to grow.

For years we have been told that the average farmer is getting older. We should be reducing the hurdles for those who are trying to get into farming to fill that age gap, not increase them and send the message that they don't matter and that their efforts are for naught.

We are asking you to not create more 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,
Scott Smith
Lebanon, Or