

Submitter: Sarah Ward

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4153

Co-Chairs Helm and Owens, Vice-Chair Finger McDonald, and members of the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water,

My name is Sarah Ward, and I am a community member of Hebo, Oregon who is passionate about supporting small-scale farming operations. Such operations increase economic and resource access resilience on the north Oregon Coast. As such, I am writing to you today to express my opposition to HB 4153. 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-scale farmers and community well-being in Oregon. Many rural regions in Oregon do not have large land owners. People who depend on being able to purchase foods on farms fewer than 10 acres in size would suffer, as would the farmers who rely on this income. This would cause a ripple effect because then the farmers would be able to spend less money at other small local businesses, such as the town's coffee cart. The north Oregon Coast, much of which is under-resourced and rural, is geographically isolated between the ocean and Cascades. Annual flooding and other environmental factors disconnect our communities from food and other resources for periods of time, including between December 9th and 20th of 2025. These factors create an urgency to maintain a resilient local food system through supporting small-scale local farmers. While farmers in general should have more opportunities, it is critical to community health that large acreage farmers not gain privileges at the expense of smaller acre farmers and the communities they serve.

Thank you for considering small-scale farmers and other people of rural communities.

With gratitude,

Sarah Ward
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