



Blown Away Ranch

22946 Fairview Lane

Ione, OR 97843

541-561-0081

blownawayranch@gmail.com

www.blownawayranch.com

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Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

Testimony in Support of HB 4153 — Family Farm Stands, Local Food Sales & Farm Flexibility

Good morning members of the committee,

My name is Erin Hansell- Heideman, and I am a dryland wheat farmer in Gilliam and Morrow counties. I'm also proud to serve as immediate past President of the Oregon Wheat League. I'm write in strong support of HB 4153.

Our family farm, like many in rural Oregon, operates on razor-thin margins. The economic viability of farmers is under constant pressure from rising input costs, shrinking commodity prices, labor shortages, and unpredictable weather patterns. In this environment, farmers must have every reasonable opportunity to diversify income and connect directly with consumers.

HB 4153 would give family farms critical flexibility:

- greater ability to sell farm products directly to consumers,
- the ability to prepare and sell value-added food products *on farm*,
- and clearer authority to host community farm events that promote local agriculture.

These options are not luxuries — they are essential tools for survival. For many Oregon farmers, adding new crops or irrigated production simply isn't an option. On our farm, we rely on dryland wheat. There is not enough moisture to support alternative crops, and regulatory constraints (including designation as a critical groundwater area) make irrigation development unattainable even where groundwater exists.

Without flexibility to diversify — through farm stands, processed food sales, on-site agritourism, or other direct-to-consumer opportunities — we're boxed into a single commodity in a volatile global market. That puts the viability of our farm, and rural communities across Oregon, at risk.

Offering consumers greater access to fresh, locally produced food strengthens local economies, supports food security, and builds stronger connections between urban and rural Oregonians. Farmers want to be active community partners — but we need the legislative framework to make that feasible.

HB 4153 is common-sense policy that empowers Oregon family farms to adapt, innovate, and stay economically viable. I urge your support.

Thank you.

Erin Hansell-Heideman,
Blown Away Ranch, Ione, OR