



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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support to HB 4153. For background, Oregon REALTORS® is an industry association comprised of roughly 18,000 members who work as real estate brokers, principal real estate brokers, real estate property managers, and affiliated industry professionals. In turn, our members represent hundreds of thousands of Oregonians in real property transactions across the state.

HB 4153 is a commonsense bill to protect farms, farmers, and property rights in Oregon.

According to [findings from the most recent USDA Census of Agriculture](#), only 10,863 of Oregon's 35,547 farm operations report net income gains. That leaves 24,684 farm operations – roughly five out of every seven farm operations in the state – reporting net income losses.

This shows that property tax benefits alone are insufficient to ensure farm profitability. EFU zones and related property tax benefits were established in our land use system to help keep farms in business. Easing the establishment of farm stores is a necessary update to our land use laws to continue the pursuit of this goal.

What reasonable business owner would choose to continue operating if their business experienced net income losses year over year?

Under HB 4153, local governments may adopt siting standards related to access, egress, and parking, as well as traffic and noise management, hours of operation, and sanitation. This allows for farm stores to operate while retaining compatibility with adjacent uses.

HB 4153 will not “open the floodgates” to commercial development, as it provides sensible sideboards to help ensure that the primary use of the land remains farming. HB 4153 would enhance our land use system. Contrary to the claims of the bill’s opponents, it would not degrade our land use system.

Like many Oregonians from all walks of life, farmers are struggling financially. Not allowing farmers to make ends meet is misaligned with the intent of our land use system to keep farms in farming. Further, it is simply wrong to tell farmers they cannot be innovative in order to be profitable, or even just to break even.

Oregon REALTORS® urges you to vote YES on HB 4153 to protect farms and farmers and strengthen property rights.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our comments.