

Submitter: Aluna Huang
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 Aluna Huang and I am a small farmer in Talent. I am writing to you today to express my opposition to HB 4153. 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 I am one of those small farmers who would be pushed out in favor of larger landowners. Through my participation in local farmers markets and my work with the Oregon Extension Service Small Farms Program, I've also networked with many other small farmers who would be similarly damaged by this bill. I have operated a small farm stand in the past, and would like to again in the future once my infrastructure is ready for that jump. In fact, my entire purpose of settling on this land in Talent was to operate a small farm stand here; this bill would quash that dream and make it difficult for me to continue farming due to the restriction on outlets. Small farms like mine need to have the same opportunities to sell their produce as larger farms. Already, large acreage farmers have many advantages over smaller acre farmers, and it is hard enough to compete against them. Why should large acreage farmers gain further privileges at the expense of smaller acre farmers? Measures such as HB 4153 are not equitable, just or necessary. On the contrary, I would argue that the scale of smaller farmers allows for a greater, more personal connection to their clientele, such that small farmers can both serve and represent the concerns of their communities better. I also wonder what the future of agriculture in Oregon will be if only the largest "grandfathered" farms are supported by legislation. Already, there's real concern about the future of farming with the dearth of younger farmers coming in to replace the older farmers; it seems to me that this bill would further dissuade our younger generations from carrying on the farming tradition that is so vital to our regional food security.

We are asking you to not put the highest 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. Ultimately, this is not a good bargain for Oregon and a better deal can and must be found.

Thank you,
Aluna Huang
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