

February 4, 2026

**House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Water, and Natural Resources**

**Subject: Testimony in Opposition to HB 4153 as Introduced**

Co-Chairs Helm and Owens and Members of the Committee:

Although I live in the city of Portland, I am very concerned for the preservation of farmland in Oregon as well as the livelihoods of farmers and farm families throughout our state. HB 4153 is a flawed bill which would require counties to approve “farm stores” instead of farm stands on lands zoned for Exclusive Farm Use (EFU).

To be clear, I support direct farm sales and farm stands. Selling directly to customers helps farms survive without changing the purpose of farmland. HB 4153, however, goes far beyond simple direct sales.

HB 4153 eliminates farm stands and replaces them with large “farm stores” that allow permanent buildings, prepared food, meals, retail merchandise, and ongoing agritourism as by-right uses in the exclusive farm use zone.

In farmland near urban areas such as Multnomah, Washington, Clackamas and Columbia counties this would especially mean:

- Increased purchase and lease costs for these much-needed 10-80 acre farmland tracts—making them out of reach for farmers who want to farm.
- Farmers will lease out portions of these 10-80 acre parcels to commercial operators for boutique grocery stores and tourist destinations. Some farmers may sell the land outright at prices unaffordable to farmers.
- Resulting pressure to commercialize farmland instead of protecting it for production agriculture.
- Gentrification and displacement of agricultural communities.

Many farmers rely on EFU zoning so they can farm without constant disputes over noise, dust, equipment, or odors. HB 4153 weakens that protection by allowing non-farm commercial activity to become the main use of farmland.

Oregon already allows farm stands, agritourism, and value-added processing under current law. Those tools support farmers without turning farmland into commercial destinations.

Please **oppose** HB 4153 and protect EFU land for farming—not for commercial retail and event development that will change the farming landscape forever.

This session is too short to deal with this complicated bill. Instead, a better approach would be to form a workgroup with representatives from all interested perspectives to craft a bill for the 2027 that achieves the correct balance and addresses some of the difficult issues that HB 4153 raised.

Sincerely,

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