



The League of Women Voters of Oregon, established in 1920, is a grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

February 4th 2026

To: [Co-Chairs Representative Helm](#) and [Representative Owen](#)
[House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water](#)

Re: HB 4153 – Use of farm land for commercial stores – OPPOSE

The League of Women Voters of Oregon (LWVOR) opposes HB 4153. Since passage of statewide land use laws in the 1973 Oregon legislature the LWVOR has advocated to maintain agricultural lands for agricultural purposes. **The League supports direct sales of products under existing farm stand provisions that require farming remain the predominant use. This bill goes too far.** HB 4153 would allow non-compatible commercial activities such as large retail stores to be established on Exclusive Farm Use land in Oregon.

The bill would allow up to 10,000 sq ft permanent retail stores selling all types of products with no requirement that products be related to agricultural operations. Up to 25% of the square footage in a store could be used for sale of undefined retail items, including beverages and prepared food.

Vague, permissive language in the bill would allow for any type of large event such as concerts, weddings and other loud, disruptive gatherings in farm country. This type of large-scale agri-tourism and commercialized development is not related to agricultural production. **There is nothing in the bill to address increased traffic and other impacts such uses will have on neighboring agricultural operations.**

If passed, **this bill would put an undue burden on counties to determine standards for siting these stores.** Discretionary language in the bill stating that counties "...may adopt siting standards for farm stores..." would lead to insufficient regulation and lack of public accountability. It's unavoidable. Especially in counties that are severely underfunded. Counties cannot afford to spend excessive staff time determining standards in individual cases for proposed uses such as farm stores or major venue developments.

At the heart of the rulemaking process that was paused last year was the push to identify consistent and predictable standards for Oregon farmers seeking to supplement their agricultural operations with other farm-related economic and educational activities. Individual counties should not be put on the spot to make arbitrary judgment calls on changes in ag land uses. **There should be clear and objective standards as to what is allowable on farmland in Oregon. This bill does the opposite. It allows too many activities unrelated to the primacy of agricultural operations.**

Thank you for understanding that details matter. Please put a pause on this legislation. There are too many variables and too much at stake to push this bill through in a short session with inadequate time for public comment. **We ask for your No vote.**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barbara Klein".

Barbara Klein
Acting President LWVOR

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sandra U Bishop".

Sandra U Bishop
Agriculture and Land Issues

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peggy Lynch".

Peggy Lynch
Natural Resources Coordinator