

Submitter: Faith Townsend

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 Faith Townsend, and I am a Port Orford community member. 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 landowners privileges at the expense of small farm stands in Oregon. We need to find a better solution.

I care about this because Curry County is made up of small, rural communities that depend on small farms—not just for food, but for our local economy, culture, and way of life. Many of us operate or regularly visit farm stands that would not meet the acreage requirements outlined in this bill, yet these farms are no less legitimate or essential than larger operations. Small farms are often family-run, deeply rooted in the community, and produce food with care and accountability. They deserve the same opportunities to sell their products and sustain their livelihoods as large-acreage farms.

Small-scale farming is important to me because it keeps food local, affordable, and high-quality. Major grocery stores offer expensive, poor-quality produce shipped long distances, sometimes from overseas. In contrast, our small farms provide fresh, organic, high-quality produce grown right here at a lower cost and with far less environmental impact. Farm stands play a critical role in connecting growers directly with their neighbors, strengthening food security, and keeping money circulating locally. There is no justification for granting privileges to large-acreage farmers at the expense of smaller ones. A farm's value should be defined by its contribution to the community, not by its size. Small farms are a vital part of Curry County's identity, and they deserve equal recognition and rights when it comes to defining farm use and operating farm stands.

We are asking you not to place a higher burden on the smallest farms. This bill takes away opportunities from small landholders and farms so larger operations can host more events. This is not a good bargain for Oregon, and a better deal must be found.

Thank you,

Faith Townsend

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