

Submitter: Abby Fessenden
On Behalf Of: Myself and other small farms
Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4153

Hello and thank you for this opportunity to hear from a small local urban flower farmer.

I oppose this bill because it would negatively impact me and my fellow small scale farmers. I started my farm as a side business to help supplement my income as a nurse after my separation from my husband. My farm is situated on 0.17 acres in NE Portland. I'm a mom of two kids and have a good job as a registered nurse and yet I'm still not able to make ends meet and needed a way to bring in more income. I have always loved flowers, but gained a deeper appreciation for them during the difficult years of covid. Flowers literally gave me life during a very dark time. After my separation, I knew I needed to continue growing flowers. What I didn't know yet was that I would begin the journey of turning my passion for flowers into a business venture selling my flowers through various channels including a little farm stand on my property. I am just beginning my second year farming and am quite worried that if this bill passes, I will no longer be able to sell my flowers directly to consumers via a farm stand. This will put incredible stress on me and my family. Having the ability to sell flowers right my property allows me to avoid more travel to get my flowers out into the world. It allows me to spend more time with children because I won't be traveling all over the city selling flowers; I just walk out and fill the stand, no vehicle necessary. Having a farm stand has given my community a means of connection to one another. When my neighbors buy flowers from my farm stand, they are literally putting food on my table. The changes being proposed in this bill are detrimental to me, my family, and my community and I strongly encourage a NO vote.

Please consider regular, small Oregonian farmers like myself that would no longer be free to sell my flowers to my neighbors. I'm a contributing member of society in more ways than just being an oncology nurse; I'm helping spread joy and connection while also earning money to feed my family. Please do not take this opportunity away from small farms like mine.

Thank you,
Abby Fessenden