

Submitter: Jon Iverson
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
Measure, Appointment or HB4153
Topic:

Co-Chair Helm, Co-Chair Owens and members of the committee

My name is Jon Iverson, and I am a third-generation family farmer outside of Woodburn, OR. I farm with three cousins, and we are currently in the process of transitioning the farm from our parents. I urge you to support HB 4153.

It is a tough time to be a farmer. We farm around 1,100 acres of grass seed, clover seed, wheat, grapes and tulips. The prices are down on most of these crops. When I first came back to the farm full time in 2011, we grew mostly vegetables, sweet corn, green beans, potatoes and squash. At the time there were three large canneries we worked with, now there is only one and the prices they are offering for those crops are roughly the same as they were in 2011. In that time our labor cost has more than doubled, the seed for those crops has nearly doubled, fertilizer, fuel, equipment parts, chemicals have all increased as well. In this time our acreage that we farm has also decreased by about 1,000 acres, giving up leased land that was far from our main farm and no longer penciled with low prices. The only reason I am still farming is because of the growth of our tulip festival.

Our tulip festival started out very small, as a way to sell bulbs directly to our customers but over the last 40 years we've had to adapt as people's buying habits changed. This bill would give safeguards for us and other farms looking to diversify their farms, sell more directly to the consumer and diversify the risk of farming.

Oregonians love their farmers and want to support local agriculture, this bill helps make sure farmers can sell directly to them and invite them onto the farm. This bill also has safeguards to make sure farming is the primary use of the property. The best way to save farm ground is to make sure farmers can make a living farming and this bill helps bolster a much-needed revenue source for many of us.

Please vote in support of this HB 4153.

Thank you,
Jon Iverson
Iverson Family Farms
Wooden Shoe Tulip Farm