

TO: Chair and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture
FROM: Mark L Brahmstadt
DATE: 02/05/2026
RE: Support for HB 4153 – Protecting Oregon’s Farm Experiences
Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Mark Brahmstadt, and I am a resident of Estacada in Clackamas County. I am writing to express my strong support for HB 4153.

I am not a farmer. I am a customer — and I’ve been one for more than twenty years.

When our four boys were growing up, my wife and I regularly took them to local farms like Plumper Farms. Those trips became part of our family rhythm: fall weekends, muddy boots, hayrides, pumpkins, apples, and learning firsthand that food doesn’t come from a warehouse or a grocery shelf, but from the work of real people in our community.

Now those boys are grown, and we’re doing the same thing again — this time with our grandson and soon to be a second grandchild!

What hasn’t changed is the value of these experiences. Visiting a working farm teaches kids responsibility, patience, and respect for the land. It gives families a tangible connection to Oregon’s agricultural roots in a way no classroom or screen ever could. These farms aren’t just places to buy produce; they are living, working parts of our communities.

That’s why I was genuinely surprised and frustrated to learn that outdated laws can make it difficult — and sometimes illegal — for farms to host the very activities that families like mine depend on. It makes no sense to me that:

- A farm store could be penalized for letting kids play on a hay bale slide.
- A school field trip or a food-preservation class is treated with legal suspicion.
- A farm could be fined for putting up a simple tent to keep families dry in the rain or shaded on a hot day.

HB 4153 brings common sense back to the farm zone. It allows farmers to remain economically viable by selling directly to customers and offering modest, family-oriented experiences that complement — not replace — active farming.

I also appreciate that this bill includes clear guardrails. As a member of the public, I want Oregon’s farmland to be protected. HB 4153 does that by requiring active farming, setting reasonable size limits on buildings, and ensuring farms address parking, traffic, and noise.

This is not a free-for-all — it's a thoughtful update that balances preservation with practicality.

Finally, I strongly support having consistent rules across the state instead of the current patchwork of county-by-county interpretations that force farmers to spend money on lawyers instead of their land.

Farms shouldn't have to fight regulatory battles just to host a harvest festival or welcome families for a seasonal visit. Please support HB 4153 so families like mine — now spanning multiple generations — can continue to enjoy and support Oregon's working farms for many years to come.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mark Brahmstadt

Estacada, Clackamas County