

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 Christine Boyle and I am a farmer and food access/agriculture support program coordinator in Bend, Oregon. I am writing to you today to express my opposition to HB 4153. Farm stands are a vital part of what it takes to go from field to fork in our local food system. But HB 4153 would restrict who is allowed to have a farm stand, replace current definitions with Farm Stores, and give large land owners privileges at the expense of small farm stands in Oregon. We need to find a better solution.

Small farms provide food security for entire regions

- Small farms focus on soil health more than industrial ones, and therefore grow much more nutritious food.
- Small farm stands provide access to fresh ingredients in the community, improving their health and lowering medical expenses.
- Small farms contribute to local food security programs, food banks, and education.

Small farms are small businesses

- Local agriculture provides employment to permanent and seasonal workers, and spends its money in the local community, at hardware and equipment stores, etc.
- Local agriculture also partners with restaurants, groceries, and even school cafeterias, further amplifying the immense health and economic benefits.

Small farms protect the environment

- Locally-grown food produces less pollution through lower shipping and production costs.
- Having many small farms improves biodiversity, which in turn promotes the resilience and profitability of the entire landscape.

Small farms are the backbone to our local food system, and they can't exist without a way to sell their products in the community—they can't exist without their farm stands. We are asking you not to remove one of the most critical tools for small farms to remain viable. This bill takes away opportunities from small land-holders and farms, while also not meaningfully benefitting the large farms that are already more powerful, established, and that support their communities less - which is what this bill aims to do in the first place. This is not a good bargain for Oregon and a better deal must be found.

Thank you,
Christine Boyle