

In SUPPORT of HB 4153!

As someone who was raised in Oregon and who raised my children here I appreciate all that our local family farms have to offer. My family has many wonderful memories of school field trips, apple picking, pumpkin patches and corn mazes, and yearly visits to find the perfect Christmas tree (complete with hot cocoa)—all done at local family farms.

Since my children have grown I have also had the pleasure of volunteering and then working at Topaz Farm. I cannot tell you the number of people who have stopped me while I was wearing my Topaz sweatshirt in public to tell me of their family's experience at the farm. From Holi Festival to Concerts to Farm to Plate dinners they all say the same thing...that they love the farm and the variety of experiences available.

Not only does the diversity of experiences make farms more accessible for more people, it also helps our farmers stay profitable. This profitability allows them to provide more jobs and farm with more sustainable practices. Additionally, activities that draw urban-dwellers to our more rural areas also help with keeping the citizens of our state more connected with one another.

I support HB 4153 and ask that the legislation vote in favor. We need your continual support in allowing farms to diversity their businesses into the agritourism space so that they can thrive and remain vital. There are immeasurable benefits to Oregonians in ensuring that farms like Topaz can stay in business, pay living wages to their hard-working employees, and provide truly meaningful and magical experiences to their communities. These farms are what help to make Oregon a truly special place to live.

Thank you for your consideration.

Joan Francis
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