

Submitter: Michelle Week

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4153

Opposition to HB 4153 – Protect Small Farm Stands and Oregon Farmland

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 Michelle Week, and I am a FARMER and hopeful FARM STAND OPERATOR in Troutdale, Oregon. I am writing to express my opposition to HB 4153.

Farm stands are a vital part of Oregon's agricultural landscape. They connect the public directly to their food system, support farm viability, and help people understand what it truly takes to go from field to fork. HB 4153 undermines this relationship by restricting who is allowed to operate a farm stand, replacing existing definitions with "farm stores," and granting greater privileges to large landowners at the expense of small and mid-sized farms.

I care deeply about this issue because I operate, support, and regularly visit farm stands that would not meet the acreage requirements outlined in Section 2(2) of the bill. I would literally need to forgo my plans of having a farm stand on my property as a direct result of this bill, leading to a reduction in revenue for my business. Small farms already face disproportionate barriers to land access, capital, labor, and infrastructure. This bill adds yet another burden by limiting their ability to sell directly to the public.

Small-scale farming is essential to Oregon's food security, rural economies, and community resilience. Small farms steward land responsibly, preserve open farmland, and keep agriculture rooted in local communities rather than consolidated into large-scale, extractive operations. A farm's legitimacy should not be determined by acreage alone. A small farm growing food with care and intention is no less a "farm use" than a large-acreage operation.

Farm stands are not just points of sale, they are community hubs. They provide access to fresh, local food; support beginning and historically marginalized farmers; and foster trust between producers and consumers. Shifting the primary purpose of farm stands toward agritourism and events, rather than the sale of farm products, fundamentally changes their role and risks prioritizing entertainment and development over food production.

Oregon does not need more large warehouse-style buildings, more paving over farmland, or more incentives that push agriculture toward commercialization and land

development. What we need instead are accessible, cooperative co-packing facilities and farm stores that support many small producers, solutions that strengthen local food systems without sacrificing farmland or equity.

We urge you not to place a higher regulatory burden on the smallest farms. HB 4153 removes opportunities from small landholders so that larger operations can host more events. This is not a good bargain for Oregon's farmers, communities, or future. A better, more balanced solution must be found.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Lim?lm?t (Thank you in the Sinixt Language),
From your farmer,
Michelle Week [m ih - sh EH I] [wek]
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