

Submitter: Laurie Wise
On Behalf Of: Small farms
Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural
Resources, and Water
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4153

My Name is Laurie and I am a community member and small farm stand operator in Eugene. I am writing to you today to express my opposition to HB 4153. Farm stands are a vital part of connecting the public with our food system and building an understanding of what it takes to go from field to fork. 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.

I care about this because I both operate and frequent local farm stands and would not meet the requirements in section 2.2. Small farms need to have the same opportunities to sell their products as larger farms. Small farming is important to me because it builds community connection, offers food resources locally in rural settings, and offers an environmental benefit. I have built relationships with people in my community because of my farm stand and we now support each other in many different ways. Small farming is also incredibly important to me not just because of the supplemental income, but because of health reasons, I cannot work in a typical work force. Running my farm stand doesn't just benefit my community, it benefits me by giving me a sense of purpose by providing my farm products to the community. There is no reason that a large farm should be considered any more legitimate than a small farm. We are all doing the same thing and small farms should not be punished simply because they are small. I'm not connected to a large store or even a farmer's market, making my farm stand products even more accessible to people in my rural community. Without my farm stand, I would not have any way of selling my products. I have no interest in turning my farm into an agritourism business. That's not why I started a farm stand. I started it simply to make the farm products that I grow accessible to my local community. Every farm started small. Large farms should not be able to gain privileges at the expense of small farms. A farm is a farm, no matter the acreage.

We are asking you to not have a higher burden on the smallest farms. This bill takes away opportunities from small land holders and farms in order for larger operations to be able to host more events. This is not a good bargain for Oregon and a better deal must be found.

Thank you,
Laurie