

Submitter: John Wood

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4153

All Oregon farmers would like to make more money farming, but HB 4153 encourages the opposite: Non-Farming! If farming in Oregon is not profitable it is not because of a problem with land, soil, water, seed, trees, or access to markets. It might be a farmer has tried the wrong crop for the soil for instance. It may be lack of expertise or local knowledge. But that is no reason for Oregon's legislators to begin to dismantle or replace farming. Support our farmers and farm lands in ways that make farming more profitable of course, but you cannot do that by cashing in farm lands for restaurants or retail stores, and you cannot do it by forcing farming as a profession to compete with outside money intent on converting farmland into anything else that is "profitable". Farm lands are the only constant here. Do not take away their protections. Support farmers in ways that do not erode what maintains farm lands.

HB 4153 gives privileges to "farm stores" that far exceed those given to other types of permits. A cider business, for example, can only sell retail items directly related to the cider it produces; sales of incidental items and services are capped at 25 percent of the income from sales of cider; and agri-tourism and commercial events are limited in several ways. All of these features ensure that a cidery is first and foremost a farm that grows apples and produces cider. This bill allows "farm stores" to sell any kind of retail items, removes any limit on the amount of those sales, and allows unlimited entertainment events. If this bill were passed, there would be an immediate push to restore parity for other types of permits, a race to the bottom in which farm land would no longer protected in any way.