

Submitter: Dar Wachs

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 in Oregon

My name is Dar, and I am a farmer and year-round farm stand operator in Deschutes County. I am writing to express my opposition to HB 4153.

Farm stands are a vital part of connecting the public to our food system and helping people understand what it truly takes to go from field to fork. HB 4153, however, would restrict who is allowed to operate a farm stand, replace existing definitions with “farm stores,” and grant greater privileges to large landowners—at the expense of small-scale producers. Oregon needs a better solution.

I care deeply about this issue because I operate a tiny, year-round farm stand that would not meet the acreage requirements outlined in Section 2(2) of the bill. Our farm stand serves as the pickup location for our Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) members and as a direct outlet for the food we grow and produce. Throughout the year, we offer plant starts in the spring, fresh produce in the summer, preserved foods in the fall, and microgreens year-round.

Our production is consistent and weekly, but it occurs in a very small growing space. While we live on an 80-acre property, we own only one acre, and we actively farm just a fraction of that—using slightly more space during the seasonal growing months. The size of the land we live on has no relationship to the volume, quality, or consistency of the food we produce.

Growing food in Central Oregon is already challenging. Finding a niche that supports year-round production and demand is even harder. Our farm stand has become a reliable and convenient hub for our CSA members, who value having a consistent place to pick up their weekly harvest of fresh greens and locally grown food.

Small farms need the same opportunities to sell their products as larger farms. Our communities need more small farmers, not fewer. Every farm—especially small ones—should be able to share their goods with their neighbors in a way that is accessible, affordable, and sustainable.

We are asking you not to place a higher burden on the smallest farms. Instead, let's work together to explore ways small producers can grow more, offer more, and sell more. There are many ways to support local agriculture and increase food access

without adding new barriers to farmers who are already succeeding despite significant challenges.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Dar
Deschutes County, Oregon