

Submitter: Troy Kapande
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4153

Hi,

My name is Troy, and I'm a farmer, rancher, and community member here in Coos Bay, Oregon. I'm reaching out today because I'm really opposed to HB 4153. Farm stands are key for local farmers to sell what they grow and keep our local food scene alive. But this bill would make it harder for a lot of people to run them, switch the rules to something called "Farm Stores," and basically hand big landowners extra perks while squeezing out the smaller operations across Oregon. We've got to come up with something better.

I care about this a lot because I know and have worked with farm stand operators in Coos County, and I've seen up close how this could mess with land use by letting bigger farms turn into event spots, all while slapping tough requirements—like needing at least 10 acres in farm use or \$10,000 in farm income over two years—on the little guys. Sure, I might farm enough land to not be affected by those rules myself, but that doesn't make it right. This bill would just end up hurting our whole community in Oregon by putting so many small farms and stands out of business and allowing others to misuse agricultural land.

I'm very against that this bill encourages misuse of agricultural land. It makes it so people can use EFU land for just about anything, even if it doesn't really pertain to farming, and that could ruin our agricultural community. As a poultry farmer, having an event space right next to my active farm would be detrimental to my birds' health—they can't handle loud noises through the day and night—and it adds a significant biosecurity risk due to the large amount of extra people driving out to rural land. It allows for a lot of misuse of agricultural land and encourages people to farm as little as possible and mainly be commercial event spaces.

I know a lot of these farm stand folks, and a bunch of them wouldn't hit the acreage marks in section 2.2, which could force them to shut down. Small farms deserve the same shot at selling their stuff as the big ones; otherwise, we're just stacking the deck against new ideas and variety in farming.

Small farming means a lot to me—it's about keeping our local ways going, helping with different crops and critters, and making sure places like Coos Bay stay strong. These small spots in our area do so much: they get fresh food to people, create local jobs, teach folks about good farming, and keep cash flowing right here instead of

going to far-off big companies.

Why give big-acreage farmers all these advantages over the smaller ones? The bill looks like it's set up to let huge landowners build massive stores—up to 10,000 square feet if they're pre-existing—and throw as many events as they want, which could turn real farmland into party zones instead of places for actual growing. A small farm shouldn't be seen as any less real just because it's not giant; what matters is the hard work put into raising and selling farm goods, not how much dirt you own.

These farm stands help the businesses and people I work with by giving them a straightforward way to sell their produce and meat, connect with buyers, and do appropriate agritourism without it taking over everything. If farms start focusing more on events than on selling actual farm products, it'd suck the real farming feel out of everything in Oregon. We'd end up with fake farms that are really just venues, bringing more crowds, messing with the environment, and watering down what makes Oregon farming great. In the end, this could wipe out a bunch of small farms that can't keep up or follow the new rules, tearing apart our rural spots statewide.

I'm asking you not to pile more hassle on the tiniest farms. This bill strips chances from small landowners and operations just so the big ones can misuse agricultural land. That's a raw deal for Oregon—we need something that protects our state not destroys it.

Sincerely,
Troy
Coos Bay, OR