

Submitter: Mark Johnson

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4153

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 Mark Johnson, and after serving 24 years in the US Army, I returned to my family's 50-acre farm in Canby, Oregon. 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 building an understanding of what it takes to go from field to fork. HB 4153 would restrict who is allowed to operate a farm stand, replace current definitions with "farm stores," and grant additional privileges to large landowners at the expense of small farm stands across Oregon. We need to find a better solution.

As a small farmer, caring for land my family has stewarded for over 100 years, I need the same opportunities to sell my produce as larger farms. Large operations already enjoy many advantages that are not available to me, and this bill would only widen the gap for those of us doing our best with limited acreage. Connecting with our local community through our farm stand and pumpkin patch is vital to remaining viable and relevant within our local food system. Any bill that devalues agricultural production in favor of agritourism is not in the best interest of Oregon's farms.

We urge you not to place a higher burden on the smallest farms. This bill removes opportunities from small landholders in order to allow larger operations to host more events. That is not a good bargain for Oregon agriculture, and a more equitable solution must be found.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Mark Johnson

C&C Family Farm

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