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 Heather Morrill and I am a community member in Portland and program manager at Farmers Market Fund, which expanded programming to serve farm stands in recent years. Farmers Market Fund is a non profit organization that makes healthy, locally grown food accessible to under-served Oregonians across the state. Our Double Up Food Bucks program is a triple win: families bring home more fresh produce, more money goes directly to small, local producers, and local economies thrive.

I am writing to you today to express my opposition to HB 4153. Farm stands are an essential part of our local food system, providing access to nutritious foods, and a place for communities to gather, learn, and grow. 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.

Small farms need to have the same opportunities to sell their produce as larger farms. The farmers I work alongside first and foremost grow food to feed their communities, we should never limit a farmers opportunity to do so based on their size (acreage in production, gross sales or otherwise). Limiting farm stands/stores because of their size is counter to the food system Oregonians rely on and so many of us are working to strengthen. Please join us to find solutions for farmers to expand their income without harming the smallest farmers. Creating policy that allows the primary purpose of a farm stand to become agritourism events, not the sale of Oregon-grown farm products, is not a good bargain for Oregon and a better deal must be found. This bill takes away opportunities from small land holders and farms to feed their community in order for larger operations to be able to host more events. Please vote "no" on HB 4153.

Thank you,
Heather Morrill