

Submitter: Stephanie Gomes

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 Stephanie Gomes and I live in beautiful and remote Port Orford. I am writing to you to express my opposition to HB 4153. Farm stands are a vital part of connecting the public with our food system and building an understanding of what it takes to go from field to fork. 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.

I care about this because my city is very rural and remote. We don't have a lot of shopping options. I shop weekly at the wonderful farm stands along the coast. I rely on them for healthy, quality food. The farm stands I often visit are small and wouldn't meet the acreage requirements in Section 2.2 of this bill. Without these small farm stands, I will be forced to drive farther distances to get affordable, healthy food. And driving on 101 isn't always the easiest route.

At a time when large corporations are gobbling up smaller businesses and consolidating their power and our consumer options into fewer and fewer hands, Oregon shouldn't be helping this happen. Why should a farm with more acres gain privileges that smaller acre farmers won't have? It makes no sense and is unfair to the smaller farmers and unfair to consumers who depend on them. Small farms must have the same opportunities to sell their produce as larger farms.

Living in a remote part of Oregon can be difficult. Having a close-knit, supportive small farming community to support us makes me feel more secure. It makes our communities thrive. Please don't take that away from us.

I am asking you to not place a higher burden on the smallest farms. This bill takes away opportunities from small land holders and farms in order for larger operations to be able to host more events. This is not a good bargain for Oregon and a better deal must be found.

Thank you,

Stephanie Gomes

PO Box 573
Port Orford, OR 97465