

To: Co-Chair Helm, Co-Chair Owens, Vice-Chair McDonald and members of the committee.

My name is Richard Holcomb. I am a 3rd generation, full time farmer/rancher in northern Douglas County.

I have been a long time member of the Oregon Farm Bureau and have served as the Douglas County Farm Bureau President in the past. I am also a member of several Ag organizations such as Oregon Cattlemen's Association, Oregon Sheep Grower's Association and Oregon Small Woodlands Association. I have an extensive understanding of the value of good land use laws as they relate to production agriculture and the succession of family farms.

I am opposing HB 4153 on the fact that we already have adequate provision in the laws for farm stands, etc. and clearly defined agritourism opportunities. We don't want unregulated exploitation of the current provisions.

To encourage an expansion of the permitted activities is going to increase the conflicts that always arise when you bring commercial activities into the EFU zones. Issues that arise include increased traffic, noise, less tolerance for normal farming practices, higher land prices and reduction of farm parcel size.

My experience over the last 50 years is that the surest way to be successful in farming is to be frugal and stay sharp in decision making without compromising the future viability of the farm land.

We have to prioritize sustainability of the use of farm ground and not open up the door to further loosen of EFU rules.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 4153. I urge you to vote no on this bill.

Sincerely,

Richard Holcomb
Holcomb Farms, Inc,
Elkton / Douglas County
Cattle, sheep, timber