

Submitter: Whitney Osborn

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4153

My Name is Whitney Osborn and I am a farmer in Hood River. I am writing to you today to express my opposition to HB 4153. Farm stands are a vital part of connecting the public with local agriculture and building an understanding of what it takes to go from field to your home. 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 I just completed my first year of operating my own farm stand. I grew up in Hood River. Two years ago I left a career in healthcare and moved back to Hood River with the goal of starting a fruit & flower farm on my family's 17 acre homestead which is located on EFU land. My hope is to create a sustainable farm that can support our family to continue stewarding this land for many generations and I believe that passing HB 4153 would jeopardize that.

This past year I grew $\frac{1}{2}$ acre of cut flowers and $\frac{3}{4}$ acre of peaches & pears. Based on our farm's acreage vs production space, I would not meet the acreage requirements in section 2.2 of the bill. I also would not have met the \$40,000 income requirement in year one, so if this went into effect I would have to shut my stand down. This is my full time job and while I certainly plan to make well over a cumulative \$40,000, it's not realistic for many farms in the first couple years.

I've already invested significant time and money including a nearly \$1000 farm stand permit, so it would be an incredible set back for me to have to shutter my doors after year one while I try to prove legitimacy for another year to meet income requirements. As HB 4153 is written, basing permittance of a farm store purely on acreage or income would penalize farms for being small or new.

I only have two primary sales outlets: my farm stand and a farmers market. Losing half of my sales outlets would be devastating. My farm stand has been integral to growing my farm in year one. It gives a place where people can come connect with the farm and me. The farm stand has helped my business grow and not allowing small farms to access a farm stand from day 1 is not right. Farmers should always have the right to sell their own product from their farm property as an outright allowed use. And that is not explicit as this bill is written. This creates an unfair burden where you can't make more money until you have a farm stand to sell your farm products but you can't open a farm stand until you make enough money...

I support agritourism and would love to see fee-based activities that promote the farm activities more easily incorporated for small farms. I will say I have even been frustrated at times by the current restrictions for EFU land and farmstands but this bill is not the answer.

I have closely followed the rule making committee that was convened last year regarding farm stands and I think it's pretty apparent that everyone interprets law in different ways. While it may not be the intent of this bill to harm small farms and farmstands I do believe it will and very careful thought needs to be placed on alternative guidelines.

I am asking you to not have a higher burden on the smallest farms. This bill takes away opportunities from new and small 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,

Whitney Osborn
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