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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 Sheri McGrath and I am a life long resident and land use consultant in Coos County. I am writing to express my opposition to the Farm Stand use being replaced with the new Farm Store use. It is my professional opinion that they are two separate uses with separate approval criteria and that both can be allowed. I am asking that you KEEP Farm Stands as a defined use and ADD Farm Store as a new use.

There are several small farm zoned parcels, some less than 2 acres in size. Small farms may only be suitable for bees, rabbits or another small production set up. It can take several years to establish a \$10,000 income component. Many small farms take time to establish, and part of that is having a farm stand that draws attention to their start up.

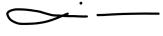
What is the intention of combining the farm stand definition into the farm store definition? I believe these to be two separate uses. A farm can apply for the one that meets their needs and can meet the approval criteria. Farm stands can be limited in size the same as the farm store has a maximum size limitation.

Farm stands tie us together as a community and desire to build a strong local food movement that is not dependent on large scale farm production. Having local food sources make us less vulnerable in an emergency situation such as a tsunami or other major natural event.

While I appreciate what I think HB4153 was intended to do, I think there is an oversight that needs to be revisited and discussed. Farm Stands and Farm Store can be two separate uses with separate approval criteria. I am asking that you KEEP Farm Stands as a defined use and ADD Farm Store as a new use.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

  
Sheri McGrath

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.....

Consider answering some of these questions or using these statements as a jumping off point in your testimony:

I operate or frequently go to a farm stand that would not meet the acreage requirements in section 2.2 of the bill.

Small farms need to have the same opportunities to sell their produce as larger farms.

Why is small farming important to you? What is the value of small operations in your community?

Why should large acreage farmers gain privileges at the expense of smaller acre farmers?

Why should a small farm be any less legitimate than a large farm when it comes to defining farm use?

What do farm stands do for your farm business or community?

What does it mean for you, your farm and your community if the primary purpose of a farm stand becomes agritourism events, not the sale of farm products?

We are 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,

NAME

ADDRESS

Sincerely,

Sheri McGrath