

Submitter: Theresa Pugh

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4153

February 6, 2026

Chair and Members

House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Oregon State Legislature

900 Court St. NE

Salem, OR 97301

Re: Opposition to HB 4153 – Relating to Farm Stores

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB 4153, which proposes to replace existing regulations for farm stands with new rules for farm stores on lands zoned for exclusive farm use. As a third-generation farmer in Marion County, Oregon, I bring a unique perspective shaped by my family's long history in agriculture. I grew up working on a 8000+-acre multi-generational family farm, but today I operate on just 3 acres of my own. This transition has given me firsthand insight into the challenges faced by small-scale farmers in our state. While the bill is not all bad, the consequences to truly small farms will be detrimental.

While the bill aims to expand opportunities for agritourism and retail on farmland, it does nothing to support truly small farmers like myself. The acreage and income requirements outlined in the bill, such as needing at least 20 acres with 15 acres in farm use or \$40,000 in gross farm income over two years for smaller tracts, effectively exclude operations under 20 acres unless they meet stringent thresholds. My 3-acre farm, which requires constant work to remain productive, would not qualify for these new "farm store" provisions, effectively removing my ability to sell directly to consumers from my property. This would surely tie the hands of small landowners and severely limit our opportunities, as we lack the scale to compete or comply. Instead of aiding small farms, HB 4153 would primarily benefit larger operations by permitting them to expand retail and event spaces, potentially leading to further consolidation and monopolization of the industry. Large farms could dominate local markets, pricing out family-run operations that serve their communities directly. Under current law, sizeable farm stands and agritourism events are already permitted, often overwhelming small rural communities with increased traffic, noise, and incidents for which operators bear little responsibility. Expanding these allowances without addressing accountability would exacerbate these issues, straining local infrastructure and resources.

I urge you to reject HB 4153 and instead consider legislation that genuinely supports all farmers, even the small ones. We need policies that help us sustain our livelihoods, provide fresh produce to our families and neighbors, and preserve

Oregon's diverse agricultural heritage without favoring industrial-scale operations. Measures could include incentives for small-scale direct sales, reduced regulatory burdens for micro-farms, or grants to improve productivity on limited acreage. Agriculture is what makes Oregon so great, but it needs to be for everybody.

Thank you for your time,  
Theresa R Pugh  
Third-Generation Farmer  
Marion County, Oregon