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On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4153

What we eat is one of the most important factors in having a healthy and enjoyable life. We all know that eating whole foods that are grown and produced locally is one of the best and most simple ways to eat well. At the same time, this choice supports our local communities of farmers and food producers. I struggle to understand why permitting farm stores on small, local farms is an issue at all. A farm stand is simply a store from two centuries ago. We're not living in a time of horse and buggies. Farm stores, where people in the modern world can gather, shop for local goods and produce, and experience farm life first-hand, are a fantastic addition to any community. I've had many wonderful experiences at regional farm stores, especially those on Sauvie Island, and am grateful to have been able to expose my children from a young age to where their food comes from. To be able to experience rural life only a few miles from downtown Portland is one of the great benefits Oregon has to offer. Comfortably shopping for locally grown food and goods on a farm seems like a completely positive experience, one that benefits everyone involved.

On the consumer side, seeing the land where your food is grown and meeting the people who grow it has so many benefits it's seems ludicrous to try to explain them. One big one is the quality of the fresh food. On the business side, shouldn't we do everything reasonable in our power to support local, family-run farms? These types of farmers are committed to stewardship of the land in a way that giant, nationally owned farming enterprises can't possibly be. We don't need to lose any more locally run businesses.

I hope that everyone considering this bill has taken the opportunity to visit a farm store. We'd be a worse state and community without them.

Sincerely

Audrey Van Buskirk

Portland