

Submitter: Christine Schillereff
On Behalf Of: Oak Island Farms
Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural
Resources, and Water
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4153

I am writing to express my support of HB 4153. As a farmer and resident on Sauvie Island I am excited to see this bill open opportunities for small and beginning farmers while simultaneously protecting farm land. In today's economy it is unrealistic to expect small farms to remain financially sustainable on farm production alone. Agritourism and farm events are essential for a modern farm's profitability and longevity. These profit streams are what preserve direct and local access to fresh produce and locally raised meats. Without diversified income, farms will not be able to afford to keep their markets open for fresh produce. Oregonians value and treasure their ability to visit farms, take hayrides, have their kids touch soil and connect to where their food comes from. Passing this bill will protect agritourism opportunities for farmers and every Oregonian who enjoys visiting our many wonderful farm stands. As a farmer who does not currently offer agritourism opportunities on our farm, I am not only excited to see our neighboring farm stands enhance their offerings but hope that one day, we too will be able to invite the public onto our farm through a farm stand, educational classes and farm to plate dinners. This bill safeguards many concerns that neighbors have had while providing farms both structure and the ability to diversify income. The amendments to this bill address the one concern I initially had- that the smallest of farms and beginning farmers would have a hard time meeting the thresholds for a permit. I believe the bill, with the amendments, is a win for farmers and a win for all Oregonians. I support HB 4135 and hope to see it pass.