

Submitter: Marie Burcham

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4153

My name is Marie Burcham and I am a community member in Dallas, OR. I am writing to you today to express my opposition to HB 4153. Farm stands are a vital part of connecting people with their food system, an essential part of supporting Oregon rural communities, and needed for many disabled people (both disabled farmers and customers).

I am currently seeking property to start a small diversified farm. I have rented farm property previously and sold some products from that farm. My plan was to do business in Oregon, but if this bill goes through I may need to look at other States because this bill is so hostile to small farm-business owners. I am also a customer of many small farms and farm stands, preferring them to larger farm stores. This bill would put those farms out of business and I would lose access to one of my only safe food sources.

HB 4153 is also very hostile to disabled business owners and community members. Farm stands and no-contact pickup is essential for farmers who must remain low-contact with the public due to COVID precautions, allergies, or being immunocompromised. Farm stands and farm stores are also a safer option for community members who want fresh food but are COVID-cautious, allowing easier no-contact delivery of food than even grocery stores.

Diversified farm income is necessary for small farms, however this bill does not achieve that goal. Instead, it would penalize the kinds of small farms that are the most needed in our communities. Small, diversified farms include those in the range of ~1-20 acres. Research shows this size farm produces the most food per acre with the least damage to the local environment. When these farms are diversified they often provide more ecosystem services (benefits to clean air, water, wildlife, etc.) to the locale than larger farms.

Farm stands are one of the safest and least labor-intensive forms of interaction with customers.

The text of OLIS (at 4(a) and including the amendments) is particularly harmful to the kind of farmers that should be most protected by Oregon laws. The acreage requirements are completely arbitrary and place a higher burden on smaller properties. The bill also leaves the door open for someone who happens to own a lot of land to do nominal farm production and unlimited agri-tourism activity, which is not

in the spirit of this law.

This law would close existing farm stands who are following the law right now but are too small to meet the requirements of the change. This bill replaces all current language around farm stands implying that folks with an honesty system stand at the end of their driveway with garden overflow, or even selling eggs from their homestead would be outlawed by this approach.

Ultimately, HB 4153 is not good for small farms or the communities these small farms service. the Why are we giving more privileges to large land owners and telling small operations that they are not allowed to have a farm stand?

Giving unbalanced privileges to larger operations make Oregon hostile to small, diversified farms and homesteads that provide more localized services to the community and the environment.

Please oppose HB 4153.

Thank you,
Marie Burcham
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