

Submitter: Bob Danko
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4153

February 6, 2026

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 4153.

I oppose this bill.

--This bill is not needed. Many farms now have farm stands. I really enjoy stopping at a farm stand, knowing that what is being sold is coming from that farm. That's the beauty of farm stands; they are not stores; they do not sell prepared foods. Stores and food services belong in cities, towns, villages, and rural service centers, not on agricultural land.

--The Oregon land use system that protects agricultural land benefits everyone. We can't keep compromising it because some voices are louder and have more political influence. My parents lived in Florida for many years. I visited often. Most folks there who are not developers or home builders now wish that the state would have protected the agricultural lands. Florida's ag lands slowly began focusing on tourism related activities, similar to what is being allowed in HB 4153. Then outside land buyers began moving in, buying up the family farms, and eventually tourism won out and the local farm economy collapsed.

--The bill description says that counties are allowed to approve farm stores. That is incorrect. The bill requires counties to approve farm stores, if certain conditions are met. This one size-fits all approach does not recognize the vast differences among Oregon's 36 counties. Hood River County is different than Lake County. It's not right to force this on counties which determine that their ag lands are too important to erode with more agri-tourism.

--The bill adds an enormous burden to county planning departments, which are already short staffed and can't enforce the rules that already exist. The section that tries to define when a farm store is allowed and what can be in a farm store is far too complicated. When you read that, do you really understand what it says? That language has lawsuits written all over it.

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