

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

My name is Alva Waterstone and I am Farmer in Noti, Oregon. I am writing to you today to express my opposition to HB 4153.

Farm stands are a vital part of connecting the public with our food system and building an understanding of what it takes to go from field to fork. But HB 4153 would restrict who is allowed to have a farm stand, replace current definitions with Farm Stores, and give large land owners privileges at the expense of small farm stands in Oregon. We need to find a better solution.

I often visit farm stands that would not meet the acreage requirements in Section 2.2 of this bill. These farm stands are not luxuries or side businesses—they are essential to food security in rural communities like mine. For many neighbors, they are the most direct and reliable source of fresh, locally grown food.

Small farms need the same opportunities to sell their produce as larger farms. Acreage alone does not determine a farm's contribution to food security. My farm feeds the community through a diverse mix of CSA, wholesale, farm-to-school, and farm-to-institution sales, and we hope one day to add a farm stand to better serve rural residents. Limiting small farms' ability to sell food weakens local food systems and concentrates food access in fewer hands.

Small farming matters because resilient food security depends on many farms producing food at different scales. Granting additional privileges to large acreage farms at the expense of smaller operations creates an uneven playing field and undermines the diversity that keeps Oregon's food system strong. A small farm is no less legitimate than a large farm when it comes to defining farm use—farming is about producing food and stewarding land, not acreage. Ironically, many larger farms that would easily meet the acreage cap do not grow food at all, which is why earlier bill language required that ingredients sold be grown on the farm. Removing or weakening that requirement favors land-rich operations whose primary goal is exporting products from the state over food-producing farms and does nothing to strengthen food security.

Farm stands are a critical tool for both farm viability and community food access. If

the primary purpose of a farm stand shifts away from selling farm products and toward agritourism events, small farms lose essential market opportunities and communities lose dependable access to local food. This bill places a higher burden on the smallest farms in order to benefit larger operations, and that is not a fair trade for Oregon. A better balance must be found—one that protects small farms and strengthens food security for all.

Thank you,
Alva Waterstone
Farm in Noti, Oregon