



THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES

Testimony In Support of SB 103
Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
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On behalf of the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and our Oregon supporters, I am writing to express our strong support of SB 103. HSUS supports strong animal welfare standards for animals raised for food, and works closely with farmers, ranchers, and agriculture professionals across the country to promote animal production methods that are humane and sustainable. As part of our mission, we encourage public policies that support and promote the independent family farmer who embraces good animal husbandry as a core principle of how they operate.

SB 103 is aimed at confronting some of the problems presented by massive industrial dairy CAFOs, where thousands of animals are tightly confined in crowded feedlot conditions. CAFOs are notorious for air and water pollution and mistreatment of animals raised for food. Confining large numbers of animals in one location inevitably creates the potential for animal suffering, and requires the intensive management of animal waste. SB 103 is a step in the right direction for addressing some of those concerns.

Industrial dairy CAFOs are not “farms” – they are animal factories. Far from the idyllic image of cows grazing contentedly on lush pastures, large dairy CAFOs are industrial in nature and, like other factories, generate air and water pollution that must be addressed by regulating authorities. The difference between an industrial CAFO and an independent family farm is stark. Animals on CAFOs are treated like units of production with little regard for meeting their basic needs to move about freely and engage in normal behaviors, whereas they are more likely to be treated humanely on the smaller family operations.

Confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs) notoriously mistreat animals. The cows on CAFOs often live their lives on bare dirt, manure, and concrete. Cows are deprived of the opportunity to graze and engage in normal behaviors, and are fed a diet that maximizes milk production.

SB 103 will address the welfare of the animals who live on industrial dairy CAFOs. SB 103 proposes to address some of these serious animal welfare problems by creating a Task Force on Dairy Animal Welfare, consisting of nine members. Both interests, the animal welfare and the agricultural, interests will be represented on the Task force. Four members shall represent animal welfare organizations, four members shall be actively involved in the dairy industry, with one

member appointed to serve as chairperson. The Task force will review animal welfare practices and make minimal recommendations for animal welfare standards on the industrial dairies.

The people of Oregon do not want more factory farming in the state. Large dairy operations have historically put small, family farms out of business. Because there is nothing sustainable about a large number of animals to live in miserable conditions, sustainable agriculture communities reject large farming operations. As demonstrated by the overwhelming opposition to the pollution permit for Lost Valley Farms, a majority of Oregonians care about the environment and want animals to be treated with greater respect.

Animal waste is huge contributor of greenhouse gases. Decomposing animal waste is the source of more than 160 toxic gases including hydrogen sulfide and carbon monoxide. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, an adult dairy cow produced about 80 pounds of manure and up to four gallon of urine a day. The waste is does not get treated in a waste water treatment. Instead the waste sits in open pits to decompose, creating gases that have an adverse impact on the environment.

These bills have more than environmental impacts. Not only will these bills help ensure air and water quality are not adversely affected by dairies, but they will help preserve the quality of life for the people in nearby communities and preserve some of the most scenic regions within Oregon.

Permits are already required. These bills will not only ensure that there is the amount of water necessary to operate a facility, but they will address concerns over air quality and animal welfare on the permitted facilities, which have previously been excluded from permit considerations.

For the foregoing reasons, HSUS urges you to vote YES on SB 103.

Thank you for considering our views on this important legislation.

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