



April 1, 2021

Chair Beyer and Members of the Senate Committee on Energy and Environment,

My name is Erin Eberle and I am the Director of Engagement at Farm Forward, an Oregon based nonprofit organization implementing innovative strategies to promote conscientious food choices, reduce farmed animal suffering, and advance sustainable agriculture by changing farming, policy, and narrative. I am writing in support of SB 583, which would enact a moratorium on new or expanding mega-dairies over 2,500 cows.

Oregon dairy farms are in crisis. In 1992, Oregon had 1,900 dairy farms. Today, only 228 remain. Nationally the number of dairy farms has plummeted while the amount of milk produced has skyrocketed. Why? Because of massive dairy factories.

When most Oregonians think of dairy farms, they likely imagine a few hundred cows ranging on pasture eating grass. Today, Oregon's largest dairy Threemile Canyon farms, which supplies two-thirds of the milk Tillamook uses to make cheese, houses 70,000 cows.

This isn't the food system Oregonians want. A food system with only a few farms, each raising tens of thousands of animals in near total confinement doesn't meet our criteria for a sustainable food system. Since the 1970's, farmers have been told to "get big or get out." This push led to the decline of small family farms and to moving animals indoors into cramped, inhumane confinement with no access to pasture, increasingly for export sales.

We have a unique opportunity to shift the trajectory of our farming system to one that uplifts our values and serves our farming community, not corporations.

I urge you to support SB 583, a bill that would halt the construction or expansion of mega-dairies (farms with more than 2,500 cows, and other legislative proposals for a mega-dairy moratorium).

Erin Eberle  
Director of Engagement  
Farm Forward