



Testimony in Support of SB 583
Senate Committee on Energy and Environment
March 31, 2021
By Kelly Peterson, Oregon Senior State Director
The Humane Society of the United States

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 583. HSUS supports strong animal welfare standards for animals raised for food and works with agriculture professionals across the country to promote animal production methods that are more humane and sustainable.

CAFOs are notorious for generating massive amounts of air and water pollution. SB 583 is a step in the right direction for addressing some of these 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 a responsibly run 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 an unnatural diet that maximizes milk production.

Large dairy operations have historically put small, family farms out of business. There is nothing sustainable about confining a significant number of animals together in miserable conditions. That is why sustainable agriculture communities reject large farming operations.

Animal waste is huge contributor of greenhouse gases. An adult dairy cow produces about 80 pounds of feces and several gallons of urine a day. The waste on a CAFO does not get treated in a wastewater treatment. Instead, it sits in open pits to decompose, creating gases that have an adverse impact on the environment.

SB 583 will have positive environmental impacts. Not only will SB 583 help ensure air and water quality are not adversely affected by dairies, but it will help preserve the quality of life for the people in nearby communities and preserve some of the most scenic regions within Oregon.

Thank you for considering our views on this important legislation.