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Senate Committee on Natural
Resources and Wildlife Recovery
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

As a farmer, I urge you to reconsider your support of HB 832, which would essentially close all mink farms in Oregon.

This bill directs the government to take private property and then leave farm families without their livelihoods. This bill is just a stepping- stone for the animal rights agenda to ban any farm that raises animals including poultry, beef and pork.

Mink farms in Oregon are run by multi-generational families. They would have to give up everything and kill the animals. I don't know how this could be legal after our farm has complied with all laws regarding our industry. My father started our farm in 1969. We have invested millions into our infrastructure and injected millions into the economy. It's offensive that this bill is under consideration.

Mink farms in Oregon are subject to an annual inspection by a licensed veterinarian to ensure that humane conditions exist for the mink. Farms in Oregon receive a certification called The Fur Farm Award of Merit that confirms that the mink are raised in a humane environment with ethical practices.

There is no scientific reason to shut down local mink farms. Zoonotic disease transmission is not uncommon, which is why Oregon's farmers and ranchers take biosecurity so seriously. The one mink farm with positive COVID-19 cases in November 2020 went into quarantine immediately and worked with the State Veterinarian and federal and state agencies to contain the virus. The farm is now clear of the virus and we should consider this a success as opposed to misrepresenting this incident as a statewide threat.

Mink farms are a part of a larger cycle of sustainability. Their manure is used as fertilizer for other sectors of agriculture. Our mink industry uses million of pounds of product from the dairy, poultry and fishing industry to feed our mink that would end up in a landfill. It's a full cycle.

Special interest groups are attempting to shut our farms down. This past year has been devastating and these groups play on the public fear of COVID-19. This could be the beginning of a new approach to shut down other areas of agriculture.

Please consider opposing this bill. The livelihoods of Oregon farmers are at stake. There would be no compensation for the families or the farmworkers who will be out of a job. We currently employ 15 people to help run our farm.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Robert W. Ruef