



April 1st, 2021

The Future of Milk is Plant-Based

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

Dairy farms have experienced a steady decrease in revenue as more plant-based milk options became accessible and affordable to the general public. The decrease in demand has caused dairy farmers to overproduce and dump well over 100,000 Gallons of cow's milk in 2020 alone that could have otherwise been given to the babies of their mother cows. This has caused undue stress on their municipalities' waste management resources.

Many argue that dairy farmers should be protected and funded, despite this obvious and inevitable trend. An increasing amount of dairy farms around America have filed for bankruptcy in the past few years, creating potential for innovation in the milk market. Dairy farms require the most land and water use, causing heavy impact on the environment & human health than any other plant-based alternatives. Land can be used more efficiently to produce crops locally for their communities namely almonds, oats, even industrial hemp, etc. without causing irreversible soil pollution and methane gases released into the air of surrounding areas/towns, negatively impacting rural families. These crops also consume less water as they do not require additional crops to be grown as "food" in the same way cows need.

Elmhurst Dairy Farms, one of the largest dairy farm operations based in New York which ran for 100 years, is a prime example of innovation, as they shut down their dairy production in 2016 to convert into an entirely plant-based dairy alternative company. They saw the future of Plant Based Milks and were able to shift their production to limit the impact of job loss for their workers.

Our testimony comes as an all-vegan food distributor based in the Pacific Northwest, having closely worked with many plant-based milk companies. We service Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and California. Recently, we have seen an unprecedented rise in popularity of Oat Milk in particular. One brand of which was recently adopted by Starbucks nationwide. Oat milk, for example, requires 80% less land and 1,000 less liters of water per liter to produce than Dairy Milk. Such statistics are just some of the reasons consumers are leaning more toward sustainable and cruelty-free options. Voting in favor of this moratorium on dairy farm expansion will not only mitigate the negative environmental consequences from additional dairy farms, but will open the door for continued innovation in the plant-based milk space, thereby still creating jobs and contributing to the overall economy.

Thank you kindly for your time and consideration,

Earthly Gourmet Distribution