



Date: Thursday, April 1, 2021

RE: Testimony in strong support of SB 583

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

On behalf of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), the more than 22,000 Oregon residents we represent and more than two million supporters nationwide, we write to voice our strong support of Senate Bill 583 (SB 583), which would enact a moratorium on new or expanding industrial dairy operations.

The rise of concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs), including industrial dairies, threatens the welfare of Oregon's animals, farmers, workers and citizens, along with public health and safety and environmental health. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the harms and public costs of industrial animal agriculture, making its regulation even more critical moving forward. Industrial dairies keep thousands of cows indoors without any access to grass or pasture, often confined and tethered in small "tie stalls" where their movement is so restricted that they can't even turn around. Conventional dairy cows have been bred to produce unnaturally high levels of milk, which can lead to mastitis, a painful bacteria infection of a cow's udder. High rates of mastitis and other illnesses on industrial dairy farms has led to an overreliance on subtherapeutic antibiotics. The scale of industrial dairies, housing sometimes tens of thousands of cows, inevitably leads to equally huge amounts of manure.

This high density of animals and manure, combined with the overuse of antibiotics, creates the perfect breeding ground for the emergence of antibiotic resistant bacteria and other pathogens, including Salmonella and E. coli. These bacteria can spread to dairy farm workers and local residents, making communities located near industrial dairies, many of which are communities of color, especially vulnerable to public health risks. Additionally, manure from industrial dairies often ends up leaching into local waterways and reducing air quality, causing persistent health issues and reduced quality of life.

It is difficult to overstate the breadth and scale of the harms industrial dairies cause to animals, rural communities, the environment and public health, but industrial dairies also harm Oregon's independent, higher welfare dairy farmers. The consolidation of the dairy industry pushes more and more small farmers out of operation every day, accelerating the growth of large industrial dairies and making it all the more difficult for small and mid-sized dairy farmers to survive. This is in direct contrast to public sentiment and consumer demand, with public surveys showing time and time again that consumers are concerned about the welfare of farm animals and more are looking for more humane alternatives to industrial farming. SB 583 would halt the expansion of industrial dairies until the state can ensure that they are regulated to account for all of their negative externalities and costs, evening the playing field for Oregon's more humane and sustainable farming community.

SB 583's moratorium on the construction and expansion of industrial dairies in Oregon is a commonsense action that will give the state the opportunity to adequately assess, measure, and mitigate the harms caused by industrial dairies. SB 583 is a critical measure to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of Oregon's animals, farmers, residents and environment and we urge the legislature to support its passage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kara Shannon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

Kara Shannon

Senior Manager, Farm Animal Welfare

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan Riggs". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

Susan Riggs

Senior Director of State Legislation,

Western Division