



ALEX CUYLER

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DATE: January 24, 2023
TO: House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, & Water
FROM: Alex Cuyler, Lane County Intergovernmental Relations Manager
RE: HB 2616, relating to unpasteurized milk

Dear Chair Helm and Members of the Committee:

Lane County supports our public health professionals in opposition to HB 2616 which would authorize the sale of unpasteurized milk. This distribution of raw milk spells a public health disaster in an environment where the average person is ill-informed of the health risks associated with its consumption.

According to the CDC, raw milk is one of the riskiest foods to consume as it contains harmful pathogens that can cause diarrhea, stomach cramping, vomiting, or even life threatening diseases such as Guillain-Barre syndrome and Hemolytic uremic syndrome. Fecal matter from healthy animals contaminates the milk with *Salmonella* and *E. coli* bacteria and creates a product unsafe for human consumption. Even farmers with the best safety practices cannot completely eliminate the risk of contamination.

Those most at risk are our vulnerable populations including seniors, children under the age of 5, and immunocompromised folks, but even healthy people can experience adverse health effects after drinking raw milk. After the compounding public health crises we have seen over the past 3 years, COVID-19, Influenza, RSV, etc., it would be a grave mistake to again leave our most vulnerable populations exposed to another health risk in unpasteurized milk.

By authorizing the sale of raw milk at farmers markets it opens the doors to unregulated raw milk consumption. Due to the lack of education on the risks of raw milk, this bill will effectively act as a safety endorsement for the product, when it is in fact extremely dangerous.

If we want to maintain and improve community health, and support our public health professionals, it's in the Legislatures best interest to oppose this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity for Lane County to provide its perspective on this bill.

ELECTRONICALLY SUBMITTED BY ALEX CUYLER, LANE COUNTY
INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS MANAGER