

Submitter: Sarah Talcott

On Behalf  
Of:

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and  
Water

Measure: HB2616

Dear Chair Helm, Vice-Chairs Hartman and Owens, and members of the committee,

My name is Sarah Talcott and I'm excited to write in support of HB 2616.

As a responsible dairy goat breeder, I want to make sure that Oregon's dairy industry follows the best possible standards across the board, especially around raw milk. Unfortunately, Oregon's raw milk regulations are falling behind — it is time to revisit and upgrade our outdated raw milk laws.

If passed, HB 2616 will ensure that Oregon producers are able to meet the growing demands for raw milk in our state safely and effectively, by implementing nationally-recognized testing, safety and risk mitigation measures and giving cow dairies the same opportunities that goat and sheep dairies already have.

For licensed dairies, raw cow's milk is currently off the table. Oregon allows the retail sale of raw milk from sheep and goats, but not from cows — no other state makes this distinction in the retail market. It's time to fix this discrepancy and improve the safety, testing and training standards for raw milk production across the board — whether you're milking goats, sheep or cows.

For the last 3 years I have sold small amounts of raw goat milk from my farm in Glide, OR. We live in a rural area and often this is an impediment to other families in town being able to have access to our milk. Our town has a small, but growing farmers market every Tuesday during the summer, but myself, and other small farms are unable to sell our milk at this central location. The logistical nightmare to provide fresh, local milk to our community is unfortunate and should be resolved.

For smaller licensed-exempt producers, HB 2616 offers these critical upgrades. If passed, this legislation will give small cow dairies new possibilities to grow, expand their business and reach more consumers in this growing industry. HB 2616 will also allow small producers more flexibility in how they get their products to their consumers — eliminating the burdensome requirement that sales transactions take place on-site. These small, common-sense upgrades will help both Oregon's farmers and the customers they serve.

As a producer AND consumer myself, I am thrilled to see this bill before your committee. If passed, this bill will help me provide a healthy product for my

community and increase food security in a rural area.

Oregon's raw milk policies are out of date and it's time for a change. This legislation will raise the raw milk standards in Oregon and ensure better transparency, access and accountability across the board.

I urge your support for HB 2616.

Thank you,

Sarah Talcott