

Submitter: Michelle Bravo

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 Michelle Bravo and I am in support of HB 2616.

As a responsible advocate, 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Unfortunately, Oregon's raw milk regulations are falling behind — it is time to revisit and upgrade our outdated raw milk laws.

For years, I've struggled to find safe and knowledgeable sources to purchase raw milk in my community. I am in favor of HB 2616 as it will allow better access to education for farmers to encourage safe handling. Allowing access to raw milk at farmers markets allows for much easier purchasing as I am there for food already. I have been consuming raw milk from trusted sources for 6 years and have never had an illness from it. I believe it is superior to pasteurized milk for health. Access to purchase raw milk is much easier in many other states - as Oregon is considered to be a progressive state I would encourage lawmakers to pass HB 2616. No one is forced to consume raw milk - those that want pasteurized milk can easily purchase it - the same should be true for those that wish to consume raw milk.

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 smaller licensed-exempt producers, HB 2616 offers critical upgrades as well. 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 consumer myself, I am thrilled to see this bill before your committee. If passed, this bill will encourage farmers in my community to offer this valuable product and make it easier for me to obtain it.

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,

Michelle Bravo