

Submitter: Natalie Danielson

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 Natalie Danielson and I'm excited to write in support of HB 2616.

I've purchased raw milk for my family on a weekly basis from a small dairy for over 6 years. I also managed a small local food grocery for a couple of years and heard from hundreds of would-be customers that they wanted a reputable and legal option for buying raw milk a-la-carte in town. The on farm pick up and weekly subscription set up doesn't work for many consumers seeking to purchase raw milk. There is a market opportunity for small, family run dairies to sell local raw milk to customers, they just need a legal and safe avenue to scale up and do so. In Central Oregon we have fantastic access to locally produced and processed meat and fresh produce, and while Eberhards provides a great Grade A product, there is demand for additional raw dairy.

As a responsible consumer, advocate, and former local food store manager, 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 Unfortunately, Oregon's raw milk regulations are falling behind — it is time to revisit and upgrade our outdated raw milk laws.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 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 raw milk drinker myself, I am thrilled to see this bill before your committee. If passed, this bill will provide the ability for producers to meet the demand for raw milk in Central Oregon and allow customers to source even more of their diet locally, keeping money in our local economy and giving small farmers a viable income.

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,

Natalie Danielson