

HB 2616: Raw Milk

Link to Bill: <https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2023R1/Measures/Overview/HB2616>

Link to Submit Written Testimony:

<https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2023R1/Testimony/HALNRW?meetingDate=2023-01-24-15-00>

Public Hearing: Tuesday, Jan. 24 at 3:00 PM

Deadline to Submit Written Testimony: Thursday, Jan. 26 at 3:00 PM

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

My name is Lauren Rhoderick and I'm excited to write in support of [HB 2616](#).

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 Unfortunately, Oregon's raw milk regulations are falling behind — it is time to revisit and upgrade our outdated raw milk laws.

I have struggled for years with the guilt of purchasing highly processed, essentially nutritionally *dead*, milk. I now have access to wonderful raw milk produced locally, which my family consumes exclusively. I refuse to support big corporations that lure dairy farmers into this non-profitable (for the farmer) pasteurized situation. Did you know that dairy farmers are making over a dollar less per 100 weight than they were in 2014? (<https://www.wisfarmer.com/story/opinion/editorials/2022/01/19/prices-paid-dairy-farmers-have-finely-risen/6583817001/>). Even as milk prices on the shelf go through the roof, big businesses are giving farmers less!

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**. The CDC has an entire page about the dangers of raw milk. What they don't mention is the high nutritional value of raw milk vs. pasteurized. They also don't mention the lack of state/federal support of testing and regulating that leads to various outbreaks within the raw community. They don't acknowledge that raw milk being produced on a broad scale (e.g. not by your local farmer with a few cows) is where the actual concern for illness arises.

In short, they are concerned about big business, not local business.

(<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5c930aceaf4683e69e2cd577/t/5df8154ff2bd8848118caaca/1576539479468/Final+RAWMI+Letter+for+Medical+Professionals.pdf>).

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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. The UK is several steps ahead of us in this regard (<https://www.food.gov.uk/safety-hygiene/raw-drinking-milk>).

As a raw milk lover myself, I am thrilled to see this bill before your committee. If passed, this bill will help me support my local farmers and see them succeed. It will allow dairy farmers who are tired of working for pennies to set out on their own and sell their own milk profitably.

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. Let's support Oregon dairy farmers, not big businesses!
I urge your support for HB 2616.

Thank you,

Lauren Rhoderick