

Submitter: Katharine Field

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources

Measure: SB85

Dear sirs and madams,

I have made my career as a university professor developing molecular methods to test for microbial pollution in water. Along the way I have worked in many field situations involving CAFOs, as they are responsible for a large amount of contamination in water. In particular, I have collaborated with scientists studying contamination around Chesapeake Bay, where runoff from chicken litter applied as fertilizer is a notable source of pollution in the bay. Runoff from CAFOs and chicken litter spreads bacteria, including human pathogens such as Salmonella, Campylobacter jejuni, and Listeria monocytogenes. This is not just a problem for recreational users of the waters; if used for irrigation, these bacteria could contaminate food crops. This material also spreads organic material into the water, causing eutrophication and changes in water chemistry that harm fish. Fishing is an activity that Oregonians from all sectors love. Chicken litter runoff is also contaminated with antibiotics and heavy metals. Studies show that sites near CAFO farms have poor water quality (for example, elevated total phosphorus and turbidity), as well as high proportions of antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

Therefore, it is a very bad idea to allow any CAFOs to be situated near water. In Western Oregon and the Willamette and Santiam river valleys, our rainy climate and low, marshy lands near the rivers would be a particular risk, especially as these lands typically flood in the winter. Please do not let CAFOs gain a foothold anywhere near the Willamette and Santiam River systems.