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March 3, 2023

Chair Golden and Members of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources,

On behalf of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), the 19,073 Oregon citizens we represent and more than two million supporters nationwide, we write to voice our strong support of SB 85, which would enact a moratorium on new or expanding concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs). The rise of CAFOs in Oregon threatens the welfare of animals, farmers, workers and citizens, along with the greater public and environmental health.

Consolidation across the animal agriculture industry pushes more and more small farmers out of production every day, accelerating the growth of large industrial operations and making it all the more difficult for small and mid-sized farmers to survive. This is in direct contrast to public sentiment and consumer demand, with public surveys showing time and time again that consumers are concerned about the welfare of farm animals and are looking for more humane alternatives to industrial farming.

Industrial dairies keep thousands of cows indoors without any access to grass or pasture, often confined and tethered in small “tie stalls” where their movement is so restricted that they can’t even turn around. Conventional dairy cows have been bred to produce unnaturally high levels of milk, which can lead to mastitis, a painful bacterial infection of a cow’s udder. High rates of mastitis and other illnesses on industrial dairy farms have led to an overreliance on subtherapeutic antibiotics. The scale of industrial dairies, housing sometimes tens of thousands of cows, inevitably leads to equally huge amounts of manure.

Industrial chicken operations house tens – even hundreds - of thousands of birds, crowded together on the floor for meat chickens, and in the case of egg-laying hens often stacked on top of each other in “battery cages.” Due to the high concentration of birds living in their own waste without adequate ventilation, high ammonia levels develop—irritating eyes, throats and skin. Thanks to selective breeding—combined with low-dose antibiotics, excessive feeding and inadequate exercise—most industrially raised meat chickens grow unnaturally quickly and disproportionately. While their breasts grow large to meet market demand, their skeletons and organs lag. Many suffer heart failure, trouble breathing, leg weakness and chronic pain.

This high density of animals and manure, combined with the overuse of antibiotics, creates the perfect breeding ground for the emergence of antibiotic resistant bacteria and other pathogens, including Salmonella and E. coli. These bacteria can spread to farm workers and local residents, making communities located near CAFOs, many of which are communities of color, especially vulnerable to public health risks. Additionally, manure from industrial animal

operations often ends up leaching into local waterways and reducing air quality, causing persistent health issues and reduced quality of life.

SB 85 is a commonsense action that would halt the expansion of large CAFOs, and give the state the opportunity to adequately measure, regulate and address the harms caused by these outsized industrial operations, rather than allowing them to continue to spread unchecked throughout Oregon. SB 85 is a critical measure to safeguard the welfare of Oregon's animals, farmers, citizens and environment and we urge the legislature to support its passage.

Sincerely,



Brittany Benesi
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Division
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