

TO THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF OREGON

Foster Farms are not farms. They are an industry. They want our open air. They want our water. And they want their way. Now you're in the way.

The construction and operation of "chicken factories" in the midst of rural areas amounts to the ridicule of persons who live there and their communities of interdependence and the sub-cultures that sustain them and have for decades into a second century. (We have neighbors whose ancestors were in this valley since the late Nineteenth Century.) There is a spiritual connection between them and the land, the air, the water, even the birds that come and go and the creatures unseen in the forests. There is nothing exploratory or temporary about the Foster Farms petition now before the Oregon State Legislature. If the Foster Farms petition were approved, there would be a wholly different transaction between people and the Earth. It would be negative and it would be permanent. Gradually, the old transaction would die away – all for the death of millions of chickens. It would end up our shame. The Legislature must not let itself be overpowered by money and legal clout.

At the very least, we need a moratorium, a time to consider all of the effects on our lives.

If the Legislature were to approve the Foster Farm's petition and establish it in law, what will be left would more disdain for the processes of government and a modulated but lasting fury. If a function of government is to keep a balance for "a greater good," our government would not consent to the Foster Farms petition.

Episcopal Bishop John S. Thornton

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