

Submitter: Megan Leatherman
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources
Measure: SB85

Dear Members of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources,

I am writing in strong support of this bill and Amendment 1, which as I understand it would place a moratorium until 2031 on the new construction or expansion of factory farms in Oregon. I believe factory farms do an enormous disservice to animals, people, and planet, as follows:

- Factory farms drain and pollute Oregon's water resources. Oregon's 11 mega dairies use the same amount of water every day as a small city.
- In addition to catastrophic manure spills, the sheer amount of manure that factory farms produce often exceeds what crops can absorb. This causes manure runoff into waterways.
- Factory farms fuel climate change by releasing harmful and dangerous greenhouse gases, like methane and nitrous oxide. Oregon's 11 mega-dairy facilities produce over 17 million kilograms of methane gas every year – the same as the emissions from 318,000 passenger vehicles.

I believe this bill would protect rural communities and small farms:

- In the eight years after the state's largest mega-dairy began operations in 1999, more than 600 small-scale dairies went out of business.
- Oregon's small farmers have long been producing healthy, safe, and abundant food for Oregonians with more conscientious stewardship of the environment, our communities, and our food supply than factory farms.
- Small family farms enhance rural economic stability and provide the basis for thriving and vibrant rural communities. Factory farms extract wealth from our rural communities.

I believe this bill is an important step toward improving our state's public health:

- A factory farm moratorium would protect us from the cancer-causing drinking water and toxic air quality that threatens the health of local communities.
- Factory farms are breeding grounds for disease. Due to unsanitary and cramped conditions, animals can carry and spread pathogens to humans, like the highly pathogenic avian influenza (bird flu) and H1N1 (swine flu).

I believe this bill would also protect farm workers and frontline communities against the worst effects of systemic environmental classism and racism:

- Oregon needs safe and dignified workplaces that support healthy, thriving communities. At factory farms, workers are often forced into unsafe working conditions and exposed to hazardous chemicals, fumes, and particulate matter.
- Factory farms are an environmental justice issue. Many of Oregon's largest dairy factory farms are in rural Latinx communities, and these communities disproportionately suffer the adverse effects of these factory farms.

Perhaps most important is the impact this would have on the animals who are currently slaughtered and/or abused by the millions in these factory farms, sentencing them to lives of unimaginable agony. Farmed animals in industrial-scale settings suffer immensely, all for the purpose of economizing production to maximize profits for a small handful of elites with other-worldly levels of wealth. We must do away with this needless and grotesque suffering; it is a stain on our state, country, and way of life.

I again voice my strong support for this bill and amendment. Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony.

Sincerely,
Megan Leatherman