

Submitter: Sharon Blick

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources

Measure: SB85

My name is Sharon Blick. My family owns and operates a small farm in Lane County. I'm writing to voice my support for SB 85.

The Farm Bureau does not speak for me in their opposition to this bill. They say it will cause the loss of Oregon family farms. In fact, it will do the opposite by making corporate factory farms pay their true cost of production rather than foisting their costs off onto family farms, other rural residents, and taxpayers.

For the past 15 years, without receiving any government subsidies, I have sold animal products from livestock and poultry which I raised on pasture. My farm is an asset to my neighbors. They get to purchase tasty, nutrient-dense products from happy animals without being subject to smells, noise, pollution, water shortages, or extra traffic. I have provided enjoyable and educational jobs and internships to many young people in our community.

But no more. Next month I will sell the last of my animals and close that part of my farm business because I cannot make a profit. Food prices are artificially low because corporate factory farms are getting subsidies and cutting corners. Their animals and their neighbors live in misery. We need more regulation of these large CAFOs so that they are paying their true costs of production. There needs to be regulation of their marketing so that the difference between their products and mine is entirely clear to the consumer. This will level the playing field so farmers who are doing the right thing can afford to stay in business.

Even though I love my land, if a large CAFO were to move into my neighborhood, I would sell my farm and move. But then I would lose money because my property value would go down since no one wants to live next to one of these places the way they are being run today in our state. We need to stop issuing new permits until we can at least get our permitting process on par with other western states. I urge you to support SB 85.