

Testimony on SB 85
Senate Committee on Natural Resources

March 13th, 2023

Dear Chair Golden, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

My name is Dave Kunert, and I reside in Tillamook, Oregon. I was originally raised on a cattle operation in Sisters, Oregon. Like many producers, my family had to sell their process due to the pressures that Oregon farmers and ranchers continue to face. Today I work for a local lumber mill in Tillamook, and my wife operates a K-12 school.

Although I am not a dairy producer, my family and community are strongly influenced by CAFO operations. These operations are family farms, not factories and are a part of the foundation of society. Our local farmers are not only the foundation of our economy but are also active in the community; donating time and resources from local food banks to schools, churches, youth programs and other areas of need in the community. They specifically support the school my wife operates in the county.

Over the years, here in Tillamook and beyond, I have witnessed Oregon's ag continue to struggle to keep up with new regulations, taxes, and labor requirements. But because of my expertise in natural resources management; I know that these operations are compliant and deeply care about the environment, water quality, stewardship, and care of their animals.

Prohibiting new or renewed permits for our local dairies, feedlots, poultry farms, and other operations like them will be highly detrimental; rippling negative impacts on our community in Tillamook.

Because of my family's experience having to sell the ranch, I also know that growth is the only way to meet the state's increased regulatory demands and keep costs down. The unfortunate reality is the 5,000 acre ranch I grew up on has now become developed and no longer provides feed like it once did for over 2,000 head of beef cattle. SB 85 proposes growth or expansion and diversification which will likely lead to more agricultural land being converted for development.

I am also concerned about this bill's impacts on our local food chain. Oregon farms are interconnected and depend on each other supplying fertilizer, seed, feed, and processing. Removing any operations will not only take people out of business; but the supply of local food products, including beef, chicken, and eggs, will be strained, which is not something we want to see or put consumers through.

I ask that you do NOT support SB 85.

Sincerely

Dave Kunert
Tillamook, Oregon