

Submitter: Corinne Thomas

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources

Measure: SB85

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

My name is Corinne Thomas, and I live in Newport, Oregon.

I am writing to you today in support of a factory farm moratorium in Oregon. This is an opportunity to limit expansion and associated degradation of natural resources by factory farmers, thereby making a statement to our small farmers that we value them and want to support them; therefore, we are reducing competition by factory farms.

There is a new generation of farmers on the horizon. I know because I am one of them. I entered my new farming career at age 50 and I'm about to turn 55. In my small community, I have encountered at least a dozen new small farmers over the past two to three years who are trying to make a living producing healthy, diverse food to share with their local communities. In addition, the demand for local, pasture raised meat, eggs and milk is beginning to exceed our capacity, so we are networking with other small local farms in the area and referring our customers to help keep the demand local.

Factory farmed food often degrades the soil, water and air at the location it is farmed, is hauled off to a second processing facility, is wrapped in plastic, shipped around, sometimes loaded with additives or preservatives, and ends up being a less than superior food. The overall monetary cost of this food to the consumer is competitive, as groceries are not cheap, even highly processed groceries that have prolonged shelf lives; however, the true cost involves the cost to the environment associated with degradation of natural resources such as soil, water and air quality in addition to disposal of production waste, plastic generation/waste, emissions associated with transporting raw materials to and from the farm to the processor and back out to the stores where the consumer picks them up.

I would also argue that there are health issues afflicting a large proportion of the population that stem from the consumption of factory farmed foods, especially when they are the majority of many people's diets. Poor health due to diet increases the amount of money in a family budget that is spent on health insurance, health care and prescriptions. Problematic conventional large scale factory farming processes include the legal and widespread use of herbicides during harvest, highly allergenic pasteurized and homogenized dairy products with extensive shelf lives, shelf stable foods laden with artificial colors and flavors. In addition, the routine use of antibiotics and wormers in large scale intensive commercial animal production has resulted in

widespread resistance worldwide.

Certainly, as Americans we value choice, and limiting expansion of factory farms will not eliminate the choice to buy these products at the supermarkets as they have a tremendous foothold in our economy already. However, making it as an independent small farmer is very difficult with the price of land, the cost of infrastructure, delayed returns on investment, limited opportunities for meat processing, cost of animal feeds, and the reduced resiliency of the little independent farmer as compared with a large corporation because of low financial reserves.

We envision Oregon as a place where small family farms enhance rural economic stability and provide the basis for thriving, healthy and vibrant rural communities. This is an opportunity to say we have limits, we have priorities, and we prioritize small sustainable farms delivering healthy food directly to their local communities. We are not going to continue to expand factory farming because it costs us more than we get back in return.

I urge you to vote for SB 85 in the 2023 Legislative Session to protect our small and midsized socially and ecologically responsible family farms in Oregon.

Sincerely,

Cori Thomas

Owner Sunny Slope Organics, LLC.  
Newport, Oregon