

Submitter: Adrienne Craig
On Behalf Of: Animal Welfare Institute
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources
Measure: SB85

Chair and Committee Members,

The Animal Welfare Institute supports SB 85-1.

Despite seeing the overall number of farms decline for the past several decades, more animals are raised and produced for food in the United States than ever. This can be attributed to the rise of mega, industrial livestock operations (CAFOs or “factory farms”) that confine anywhere from a few thousand, to millions of animals at one location. On conventional CAFOs, animals are intensively confined, with limited, if any, access to the outdoors and few opportunities to exhibit natural behaviors. To prevent animals from injuring themselves and each other due to stress, crowding, and frustration, painful mutilations are performed, such as tail docking, teeth grinding, and beak trimming.

The unchecked growth of CAFOs also make it extremely difficult to respond to animal health emergencies. Recently, an outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) wreaked havoc across the country, leading to the destruction, or “depopulation,” of over 58 million domestic birds. The USDA requires the depopulation of every bird at a site with a positive HPAI diagnosis. Twenty cases of confirmed HPAI involved the depopulation of over 1 million birds on a single operation, and over 35 cases involved 100,000 or more birds. In many instances, because these operations were so massive in scale, the time needed to depopulate the animals to limit the spread of disease and alleviate the suffering of those afflicted by it exceeded 48 hours; animals simply could not be killed fast enough to meet the USDA’s own preferred timeline.

Oregon has the opportunity to lead the country in beginning to limit the number of farmed animals in the state that suffer poor welfare in extreme confinement or become victims of preventable depopulation in the next pandemic. At the same time, Oregon can ensure its communities are safe from the pollution and public health risks that are inevitable consequences of having industrial animal production in the state.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.