

Dear Legislators,

I am opposed to SB85 and -1 Amendment. I grew up in Albany, Oregon and lived there until 2009 and now reside in Oregon City. While growing up in Albany I worked in the grass seed industry and spent many years on grass seed fields immediately adjacent to chicken farms. I did not realize until I started working for Foster Farms in 2009 that the chicken barns I had been working next to were indeed chicken barns, as they blended in with the farming community. These chicken barns did not have any less than desirable odors as some people in support of this bill have claimed.

Now that I manage the agricultural side of Foster Farms in the Pacific Northwest, I understand why these farms seemed to blend into the landscape. The CAFO program managed by the Oregon Department of Agriculture is robust and has a 97% compliance rate throughout the state. This program includes all farms that raise livestock. The chicken farmers in Oregon are prime examples of farmers who comply with all CAFO regulations. The farms are clean and do not cause an obnoxious odor or undesirable visual presentation, as each farmer takes pride in their property and environmental stewardship. The chicken farms are a unique operation because the manure produced is a dry product with complete containment. The chicken farms have manure barns on site with concrete floors that store the dry product until there is enough material to export for organic fertilizer. The manure is composted within these barns creating some of the most efficacious organic fertilizer on the market. This organic fertilizer typically is exported to row crop or nurseries within the Pacific Northwest and replaces the need for harmful synthetic fertilizers. As an Oregonian, the environmental impact of anything we do in our daily lives is important to me and I take pride in this efficient and environmentally friendly process.

We are fortunate to be working with an amazing group of family chicken farmers that are incredibly professional and care deeply about their animals. Though farmers are highly regulated in the state of Oregon, they continue to go above and beyond the required regulations to ensure their animals are taken care of with the best animal husbandry methods in the country. All family chicken farms that we contract with are American Humane Certified along with some that are Certified Free Range.

There is a misconception that Foster Farms is “expanding” with plans to export all product. This simply is not true. We are merely trying to remain sustainable in more ways than one. The new chicken farms or barns are replacing retiring farms or older antiquated barns. New chicken barns are built with high efficiency heaters, fans, cooling systems, and LED lighting. All of which, provide a better living environment for chickens while being good stewards of our environment. Foster Farms is not expanding, we are trying to replace chicken barns that are no longer in operation to maintain the same volume as we have had, so we can continue to feed the growing families of Oregon and Washington.

As time has moved on and the population in Oregon has grown, family farms have been forced to shut their doors due to urban encroachment and supply chain costs. There are 66% less chicken farmers today than there were two decades ago in our state. It has become more difficult every year for farmers to build chicken farms due to the increased cost and harassment they receive when trying to build a farm for their family in rural Oregon. If farmers can't build farms to provide for their families in rural Oregon, where are they welcome? The argument from the opposition boils down to “not in my backyard”. The same activist groups are at it again with the same motive and evolving tactics to stop

Oregon families who want to live on a farm, from achieving their dream. I urge you to consider the impact this bill will have on Oregon family farmers. This will not only stop families from building farms, but it will put many farmers in an impossible financial position that will end in bankruptcy. Rural Oregon has an admirable history of agriculture, and it's bills like this that risk the future of farming in this state. I respectfully ask that you consider those families that would be financially destroyed or those that would no longer have opportunity to provide for their children in the beautiful rural areas in our state.

Respectfully,

Rich Reid