

Submitter: Halle Riddlebarger
On Behalf Of: Medford Food Co-op
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources
Measure: SB85

Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Girod, and members of the Senate Natural Resources Committee,

My name is Halle Riddlebarger and I'm writing on behalf of Medford Food Co-op.

Medford Food Co-op is a local community-owned grocery store located in Medford, Oregon. The Co-op is cooperatively-owned by more than 4,800 community members. We feature organic produce from local farmers and a variety of local and regional products, from fresh produce to bulk goods to beer and wine. We exist to sustain a vibrant, healthy community and a thriving local, organic food economy.

We are writing today in support of a factory farm moratorium in Oregon. We must take action to halt the expansion of factory farming in our state until we have protections in place for the environment, animal welfare, family farms, and frontline communities. SB 85-1 is necessary to properly regulate factory farms and protect our rural communities. The -3 amendment does not go far enough and cannot be allowed to stand as our only way forward. We urge the committee to support the strongest version of this bill and vote SB 85-1 out of your committee.

Medford Food Co-op owners and shoppers want to know where their food comes from, how it is grown, and who grows it. Oregonians want community-based agriculture that delivers safe food to all Oregonians. Industrial-scale production and CAFOs use more than their fair share of resources and are often owned by out-of-state folks who don't invest in our local communities, and aren't concerned about the environmental impacts of their operations. Here in Southern Oregon, water resources are scarce and climate change is already increasingly impacting local farms and ranches. Large CAFOs will only make these problems worse.

We envision Oregon as a place where small family farms enhance rural economic stability and provide the basis for thriving and vibrant rural communities. Factory farms monopolize meat processing infrastructure and make it harder for our local independent farmers to find processing – an ongoing struggle for our local farmers and ranchers.

We urge you to vote for SB 85 with the -1 amendment in the 2023 Legislative Session to protect socially and ecologically responsible family farms in Oregon.

Sincerely,

Halle Riddlebarger
Outreach Manager
Medford Food Co-op