

Submitter: Neil Moffett
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules
Measure: SB85

Dear Chair Lieber, Vice Chair Knopp, and Members of the Senate Committee on Rules,

My name is Neil Moffett, and I live and farm near the town of Scio, in Linn County.

The people of Oregon and you our representatives need more say over how large agribusinesses and "factory farms" exploit our communities and natural resources. Although I would prefer that SB 85-1 was passed to give ample time for responsible policy direction, I support SB 85-4 as a move in the right direction.

Many of us who oppose large-scale CAFOs and support better regulation of such are not typically "pro-regulation" people. We support free private enterprise and we are wary of increased government regulation. However, we recognize that when a private enterprise is so large that it has a disparate impact on the local community, we need strong and effective government to ensure that the local community is protected and prospers. We want Oregon's representatives to provide effective legislation so that local Oregon regulators can do their jobs and ensure that Oregon residents, present and future, continue to enjoy the benefits of Oregon's natural resources and rural economy. It is better to have local regulators, whom we can call on the phone or visit at their office, oversee this important issue, rather than the inaccessible managers and out-of-state investors of a large scale agribusiness CAFOs.

SB 85, as amended, differentiates between normal, traditional confined-animal operations, and new operations running at a scale larger than our communities have seen and with consequently much greater potential negative impact. We need to ensure Oregon's small farmers can continue to operate while putting protections in place to ensure newly-proposed mega-farms do not harm our local communities and ecologies.

Large-scale mega-farms do not provide a good return to Oregon residents on the natural resources they exploit. Family farmers in Oregon live and raise our children here next to Oregon's streams and rivers. Local farmers are thus mindful of the impact our activity has on the local ecology and the health of Oregon residents. Large-scale factory farms beholden to out-of-state investors must be more closely-regulated to ensure they do not pollute our streams and rivers.

Mega-farms are also not like normal family farms which invest in their local

communities and support local food processing businesses and retailers. Local family farms support good local jobs by contracting with local businesses. Local family farms reduce food costs and improve food security for Oregon residents by selling here at home and exporting their surplus. In contrast, large-scale CAFOs appear to often contract for services with the lowest bidder and sell to the highest bidder, even if that means shipping product out of state or out of the country. Tax revenues are never enough to make up for the hollowing out of the local economy.

Our family owns and operates a small scale livestock farm. We sell out of our products every year; the number one limit on our growth is consistently the lack of local, small-scale meat processing. Factory farms monopolize meat processing infrastructure and make it harder for independent farmers like us to find processing. They also attract more contract-only processing facilities to the state not open to other farmers. These facilities disincentivize plants from working with small farmers like me, limiting my options even more. I have to make my appointments sometimes 12 months in advance, which severely limits our ability to serve our customers.

I urge you to continue to work with Friends of Family Farmers and their coalition members to craft strong regulation for the largest CAFOs in the 2023 Legislative Session to protect our small and mid-sized socially and ecologically responsible family farms in Oregon.

Sincerely,
Neil Moffett
Anchor Ranch Farm
Scio