



March 22, 2025

RE: COIN Testimony in Support of SB 80

Chair Golden, Co-Chair Nash, and Senate Committee Members:

We are writing on behalf of the Consolidated Oregon Indivisible Network (COIN) to urge you to vote yes on SB 80 to prohibit permits for new, large, or expanding Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs or factory farms) in Oregon's three designated Groundwater Management Areas (GWMA's).

COIN is made up of Indivisible groups across Oregon and has its own Climate Energy Environment (CEE) Team. COIN's CEE Team collaborates with organizations, agencies, and groups across the Pacific Northwest to advocate, in part, for laws and programs that promote and protect our natural world and resources including our water supply. Our members include and we work with folks and communities that are unfairly impacted by industrial pollution and development.

The GWMA's were designated as such decades ago because of widespread nitrate contamination found in the groundwater.

<https://www.oregon.gov/deq/wq/programs/pages/gwp-management-areas.aspx> It has long been known that a significant portion of the groundwater

contamination in the Lower Umatilla Basin GWMA, as an example, comes from CAFOs. There is no question nitrate contamination in GWMA's has violated the Safe Drinking Water Act; nitrate pollution has created a serious public health crisis that has devastated families.

<https://www.oregon.gov/deq/wq/programs/pages/nitratecontamination.aspx>

Also, after first testing residential wells in 2022, Morrow County in the Lower Umatilla Basin GWMA declared a public health emergency because nitrates contaminated the drinking water. A recent DEQ analysis of wells in the Lower Umatilla GWMA showed nitrate pollution has become worse in the past decade with nitrates continuing to leach into the groundwater and increasing concentrations in drinking water.

[https://www.opb.org/pdf/Nitrate\\_Analysis\\_1737670254784.pdf](https://www.opb.org/pdf/Nitrate_Analysis_1737670254784.pdf)

The Environmental Protection Agency has told the state to deal with the sources of nitrate contamination. In July 2022 EPA stated in a letter that Oregon must “hold nitrate sources accountable...to change their practices to reduce the amount of nitrate they discharge to groundwater in order to protect the health of their employees and neighbors”. The EPA identified the Oregon CAFO National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit as a “required” tool to accomplish this.

After all these years, it is evident we can no longer rely on voluntary best management practices for CAFOs, particularly in GWMA. Knowing CAFOs are a cause of nitrate pollution of groundwater, why on earth would we allow more of them in GWMA specifically designated as in need of remediation of nitrate pollution? If we are serious at all about protecting the health of families from drinking water contaminated by CAFO pollutants, passing SB 80 should be an easy step.

On behalf of COIN, we urge you to take this step to protect the health and safety of Oregonians and assure we have safe drinking water. Please vote yes on SB 80.

Laura Allen, North Coast

Becky Orf, Ashland

Monica Tomosy, Sisters

On behalf of Consolidated Oregon Indivisible Network - COIN