



March 25, 2025  
Senate Natural Resources Committee

### **Testimony in Support of SB 80, legislation to stop new or expanding large CAFOs in GWMA**

Dear Chair Golden, and Members of the Senate Natural Resources Committee,

Mercy For Animals, a nonprofit organization with approximately 3,100 supporters and staff members in Oregon dedicated to building a just and sustainable food system, urges this committee to support SB 80, legislation that would halt the expansion of factory farming, defined by the Oregon Department of Agriculture as large Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs), in our state's groundwater management areas ("GWMA") until contamination is brought down to safe levels.

#### Animal Welfare and Supporting Family Farms

As consumers become more conscious of the products they buy, many opt for products from animals raised according to higher animal welfare standards. Small, welfare-oriented family farms typically abide by such standards, while large CAFOs do not. SB 80 would help prevent large, vertically integrated and out-of-state companies from moving into Oregon and threatening small family farms. This important legislation would also help small family farms get a competitive edge on CAFOs, which would stimulate our local economies and support existing efforts, such as Oregon State University's Small Farms Program.

#### Environmental Justice

Environmental justice and our food system are inextricably linked, and low-income people and communities of color are most impacted by system failures. Some of Oregon's largest CAFOs are situated in rural Latinx and Hispanic communities. Consequently, these communities experience higher rates of water, air, and ground pollution. No community should suffer health harms for private profit. By supporting SB 80, Oregon would be taking a much-needed step toward prioritizing the needs of low-income communities and communities of color and more adequately addressing the unequal burdens of pollution.

#### Public Health

Nitrate from fertilizers and manure from CAFOs pollutes groundwater and threatens the health of those who drink it. Drinking nitrate-laden water can cause severe health problems, particularly in women and infants, such as certain types of cancers, blue baby syndrome, thyroid issues, and other adverse health effects. Preventing any new or expanding large CAFO would prevent new sources of pollution in GWMA which would give state regulatory agencies the time they need to address existing sources of pollution. We can no longer rely on intervention from the federal EPA to address this crisis, so our state elected officials need to do more to prevent pollution from contaminating our drinking water.

SB 80 would halt the expansion of large CAFOs, defined by the Oregon Department of Agriculture as large CAFOs, in our state's groundwater management areas until contamination is brought down to safe levels. **Accordingly, Mercy For Animals urges this committee to support SB 80.**

Sincerely,  
Mercy For Animals

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