Senate Committee on Environment & Natural Resources
March 9, 2017
Opposition to SB 197

My name is Wade Flegel and our family farms in the Prineville area. We have family members that are wanting to come back to the farm after graduation from college. Our major crop is alfalfa so to provide for the addition of family members and to complement the use of our resources we are in the process of starting a dairy in Central Oregon.

This process has not been easy with existing regulations as just to get the CAFO permit took over a year. The Department of Agriculture was out of agreement with EPA and could not issue new CAFO permits until an agreement was reached.

We are now working with the Department of Agricultural on grade A milk sale requirements for sanitation and cow housing.

All of this is proceeding as we try to secure financing for this facility with a start up goal of 120 cows and to grow to 400. This would be considered a small to medium sized dairy. As we are delayed by regulations the cost increases and makes it harder to get the required financing especially since ag prices are well below averages and some commodities are even below cost of production. Small operators and new startups are the ones most affected.

Our model for this dairy is to recycle the nutrients from the the alfalfa through the cows, capture the manure in a straw bedding pac and apply the nutrients back to the land where the alfalfa and grains were grown. This would do two things, the straw will capture the manure and urine, making a compost that can then be worked back into the ground, reducing odor and the need for commercial fertilizer. This would provide a more sustainable whole farm plan. This plan is going forward without an unnecessary air quality regulation.

This dairy will be on the small family operation scale but if you put another regulation that we must meet, you may put the nail in the coffin to our goal of having our family continue farming together.

I urge you not to move this bill forward.

Sincerely,

Wade Flegel