

Testimony regarding SB 103, SB 104 and SB 876

I get it. People are angry about what occurred at a large Eastern Oregon dairy. These bills are not the answer. They represent an attack on Oregon milk and meat producers which will impact more than the 5 or 6 large dairy businesses they are aimed at.

A few facts:

The number of farms in Oregon has decreased from 38,553 in 2007 to 34,200 in 2017. As of a couple of days ago, there were 525 farms for sale in this state. I could not tell you how many of those were dairy farms. I can tell you as someone who was born on a Wisconsin dairy that it is not a life that most young people want. My Wisconsin relatives milk twice a day, 365 days a year. Many farmers have never traveled more than 100 miles from home due to the demands of running a dairy farm.

Add to the work, the fact that milk prices are exceedingly volatile. Milk prices for the first 6 months of 2018 averaged \$18.40 per 100 lbs., a loss of \$1.40 or 7.1 percent compared to 2017. Add to that, the impacts of rising oil prices for transporting milk, increasing corn prices due to the use of corn for ethanol, and it is clear that the future of small dairy farms does not look good. So, do we legislate away the large dairy farms? Do we quit drinking milk or eating yogurt, cheese and ice cream? Do we ignore the fact that much of the farm employment occurs in the manufacture of products made from milk?

The answer to the bad situation on everyone's mind is not to make it impossible for large dairies to exist. Like it or not, the economics of the dairy business means we will have fewer larger farms. The idea of suggesting that large dairies should be controlling the passing of gas of cows seems ludicrous to me. Also, the limit on water available to these "farms" to 5,000 gallons per day is a sure way to make dairy cattle sick and create dairies that are unsanitary resulting in contaminated milk going to the public. An average dairy cow produces between 6 and 7 gallons of milk a day. 2,500 cows would produce 15,000 gallons of milk daily at 6 gal per day. Limiting water to 5,000 gallons per day is hardly animal friendly!

To show how ridiculous this suggestion is, the Oregon Department of Energy plans to allow the Summit Ridge Wind Development to use 15,000 gallons of water daily claiming that the Oregon Water Resources Department has said that the fact that people working at the wind site will be drinking water, showering, and using the toilets means it qualifies as a "domestic" site. If an industrial wind development is authorized to use 15,000 gallons of water daily for the half dozen people working there, how do you justify limiting water use at dairies to 5,000 gallons per day for a dairy providing water to 2,500 plus cattle and employees working the 24 hr. per day that these run?

I plan to request a contested case on the decision by the Oregon Department of Energy and perhaps the Oregon Water Resources Department if they indeed did provide concurrence in this decision. Regardless of the outcome of that action, my point is, don't ask dairies to control the natural processes of cattle which would be occurring no matter where they are housed, and don't do things like limit water which is necessary in quantities large enough to keep cattle healthy and producing milk and farmers able to keep the milk houses clean and sanitary. There

are not that many large dairies in Oregon, but economics will mean there will be more if we want to continue drinking milk and eating dairy products.

Before driving large dairy operations out of Oregon, consider that 34% of Oregon's annual farm income comes from livestock. Legislating large dairies out of business means jobs lost in all manufacturing using milk. The 2012 Census for Agriculture indicated the average annual net income per farm was \$22,954. While it has no doubt increased, the idea of relying on small farms to provide the state with dairy products without having shortages and huge price increases does not seem prudent.

Please consider an amendment to replace any of these bills leaving this committee that could be a couple of lines long requiring monitoring and bonding of facilities to pay for clean-up when the dairy ceases business. This legislature is not requiring any other group I am aware of to have bonding for hazards occurring during operation. None for utilities, none for wind developments, none for other farming or industrial operations. There should be none for dairies.

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Thank you for reading my comments.

Sincerely,

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