

March 30, 2021

Senate Natural Resources and Wildlife Committee Members,

As an Oregon mink rancher who has been raising mink for 40 years, a profession I began with my father when I was 15-years-of-age, I urge you to oppose Senate Bill 832.

I never dreamed a time would come when I would need to write a letter defending my life's work, in an industry whose history in Oregon dates back to 1913. It's difficult to believe that legislators, *my* representatives, would seriously consider a bill that directs the government to take my private property, and offer no compensation to myself, other ranch families, or numerous employees who would lose their livelihoods under the nonsense proposed in SB 832.

The authors of the bill suggest that we could recover losses by applying for loans that would plunge us into debt; or more insultingly, "retrain" for a new profession as though I, my colleagues, and all our employees, are monkeys needing to learn new tricks. The bill is offensive in it's wording and in the suggestion that families be required to give up their livelihoods, and to kill and bury their animals.

There is no science to justify shutting down local mink ranches. Zoonoses are a part of life for all of us, for anyone who interacts with animals. Lyme Disease, swine flu, and chicken pox are examples of diseases caused when microbes from animals infect humans who, unfortunately, have the ability to spread disease to animals as well. Fellow ranchers and I take biosecurity seriously. My employees have been vaccinated against the recent coronavirus, and they wear masks and protective covering over their clothing to protect the mink from outside disease sources.

In November of 2020, it was found that one rancher had confirmed COVID-19 cases among his mink herd. The entire ranch went into quarantine immediately and worked with the state veterinarian as well as state and federal agencies to contain the virus. The ranch is now clear of the virus which is a HUGE success! Yet, there are special interest groups who would prefer to misrepresent this as a statewide health threat, which it clearly isn't.

It's discouraging to see these special interest groups attempt to shut down family ranches, especially after such a devastating year worldwide. They attempt to play on people's fears about COVID-19. It has been suggested, and I suspect it's true, that this is the beginning of a new approach to close down other sectors of animal agriculture. Once ranchers and farmers lose the ability to feed and clothe the U.S. population, how will Oregon meet the basic needs of it's citizens?

My family and I urge you to oppose this unfair and unethical legislation. Please vote NO on SB 832. Thank you.


Sincerely,



Randy J. Lucas



Rebecca J. Lucas



Kendra J. Lucas