

Dear Committee Members,

I urge you to oppose SB 832. This bill is awful. It opposes farming, family-owned businesses, and destroys an entire industry of Oregon's farm economy. And for what? There is no scientific reason to shut down local mink farms. Zoonotic disease transmission is not uncommon, which is why Oregon's farmers and ranchers take biosecurity so seriously. The one mink farm with positive COVID-19 cases in November 2020, went into quarantine immediately and worked with the State Veterinarian and federal and state agencies to contain the virus. The farm is now clear of the virus, and we should consider this a success as opposed to misrepresenting this incident as a statewide threat.

Mink farms are multigenerational operations with a long history in Oregon. Local farm families would have to give up everything AND kill and bury their animals immediately. To add insult to injury, SB 832 suggests that these families could apply for loans (after losing everything) or retrain for a new profession. Not only is the premise of this bill false, but Oregon's mink farms actually are part of a larger cycle of sustainability. Mink consume food waste that would otherwise go to the dump. Their manure is used as a fertilizer for other sectors of agriculture. It's a full cycle.

It is upsetting to see special interest groups attempt to shut down family farms, particularly after such a devastating year, and to play on people's fear about COVID-19. There is no scientific data that mink transmit COVID-19 to humans. Follow the science.

I urge you today to vote NO on SB 832. This unfair legislation, which ultimately eliminates the livelihoods of more Oregon farmers, leave more people jobless, raising our unemployment numbers, and eliminate a sector of animal agriculture. Again, I ask that you vote NO on SB 832. Thank you for considering my comments.

Blessings,

Kelly Grassman, Farming Advocate