

I strongly oppose SB 832 and I urge everyone to dig deeper into the issue being presented before you.

This bill was not brought forward to reduce the spread of Covid-19. This is an attack on agriculture in Oregon. Extremists are seizing the opportunity before them. They are taking advantage of a pandemic to shut down our farms when they are most vulnerable.

The mink industry is heavily regulated. Farmers work very closely with veterinarians to make sure their animals are healthy and well cared for. Zoonotic disease is not unfamiliar to farmers and they take it very seriously. Farm workers are now eligible for vaccination. A vaccine for the mink is almost ready to go and will be administered in the next coming weeks. This removes any emergency and ground for this bill. Farms can be restricted to just their workers. They can enforce social distancing, mask wearing, hand washing, and temperature checks. Employees are encouraged to stay home if they don't feel well. Farms are safer than your neighborhood grocery store, the businesses, restaurants, and shops that are re-opening, and even the schools we are sending our children to.

Prohibiting mink farming would do far more damage to our rural communities than any perceived "good". Workers would lose their jobs in a time when there is a lot of uncertainty, farmers and their families would lose everything. There is no amount of compensation that could make a farmer whole for their time spent or their financial/emotional investments.