

Submitter: Aimee Danch

On Behalf  
Of:

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and  
Water

Measure: HB2616

Dear Chair Helm, Vice-Chairs Hartman and Owens, and members of the committee,

My name is Aimee Danch and I'm excited to write in support of HB 2616.

As a responsible landowner, farmer, rancher, mother and business owner I want to make sure that Oregon's dairy industry follows the best possible standards across the board, especially around raw milk. Unfortunately, Oregon's raw milk regulations are falling behind — it is time to revisit and upgrade our outdated raw milk laws.

We have customers asking for raw milk shares WEEKLY but we will not diversify our operation or incubate another with such risk. These are active community members and families seeking a modicum of control over their own food. It truly is time to stop making good food so hard for people who are informed of the risks.

If passed, HB 2616 will ensure that Oregon producers are able to meet the growing demands for raw milk in our state safely and effectively, by implementing nationally-recognized testing, safety and risk mitigation measures and giving cow dairies the same opportunities that goat and sheep dairies already have.

For licensed dairies, raw cow's milk is currently off the table. Oregon allows the retail sale of raw milk from sheep and goats, but not from cows — no other state makes this distinction in the retail market. It's time to fix this discrepancy and improve the safety, testing and training standards for raw milk production across the board — whether you're milking goats, sheep or cows.

For smaller licensed-exempt producers, HB 2616 offers critical upgrades as well. If passed, this legislation will give small cow dairies new possibilities to grow, expand their business and reach more consumers in this growing industry. HB 2616 will also allow small producers more flexibility in how they get their products to their consumers — eliminating the burdensome requirement that sales transactions take place on-site. These small, common-sense upgrades will help both Oregon's farmers and the customers they serve.

As a producer and consumer myself, I am thrilled to see this bill before your committee. If passed, this bill will help us likely incubate another business (micro-dairy) in NE Oregon that is desperately needed and asked for regularly. This is about food security and nutrition and the right to make informed decisions.

Oregon's raw milk policies are out of date and it's time for a change. This legislation will raise the raw milk standards in Oregon and ensure better transparency, access and accountability across the board.

I urge your support for HB 2616.

Thank you,

Aimee Danch  
Square Mile Ranch  
NE Oregon