

Submitter: Mindy Stone

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 Mindy Stone and I live in Eugene, Oregon and I'm excited to write in support of HB 2616.

As a passionate buy local and responsible consumer, 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 Unfortunately, Oregon's raw milk regulations are falling behind — it is time to revisit and upgrade our outdated raw milk laws.

I've lived in Oregon since 2014 and since moving here from California where I used to buy clean, healthy raw milk in the local grocery stores, I had trouble trying to find a local raw dairy that I could get clean, healthy raw milk from. It took me a few months but started buying from Deck Family Farm as a CSA cow herd share member, but living in Mapleton made it hard to make the drive to Junction City to pick up raw milk and cream. I then found a group in Florence that took turns driving to Yachats to pick up raw milk and cream as a CSA cow herd share member. After moving to Eugene in 2018 I joined another CSA raw dairy farm cow herd share program in Cheshire. Frankly, I am tired of having to drive long distances to pick up a basic food item, milk and cream, that I should be able to buy in a local grocery store.

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.

I'm so glad to see this bill before your committee. If passed, this bill will help me access clean, healthy raw milk and cream without effort that I've had to take in the past and currently.

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,

Mindy Stone