

Submitter: Brett Zimmerman

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 Brett Zimmerman and I'm excited to write in support of HB 2616.

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 Unfortunately, Oregon's raw milk regulations are falling behind — it is time to revisit and upgrade our outdated raw milk laws.

For the past ten years, I've raised a small herd of dairy goats and tried to sell excess milk to the community. However, the stipulation on farm-only pick up hamstrings those of us who don't live right next to an urban center. With land prices what they are, we are lucky to only be about an hour SE of Portland but folks don't want to spend two hours in the car (and a couple gallons of gas) to buy a gallon of milk. We practice very strict milking hygiene, use our milk ourselves, and submit samples for quality testing to local labs. There is high demand in the area for quality, tested, raw milk but when potential customers hear they have to come to us to get it, they rarely follow through, and understandably so. Allowing small dairy farmers to participate in farmers markets or home delivery would greatly expand opportunities for sales that support us, our animals and our communities. We take pride in supporting our local family-owned feed store and (for better or worse) or local vets know our voices on the phone. We appreciate being able to support these businesses in our small community but leave a lot of money on the table with the on-farm restrictions on milk sales. Allowing folks greater access to locally-produced raw milk will not only help the farmers and our local economies but contribute to smaller carbon footprints by giving folks access to milk that doesn't generate massive amounts of methane from large-scale cow dairies. Additionally, having a central site to report our clean test results to would help consumers do the research necessary to support farms who engage in rigorous quality control.

HB 2616 will 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, I am thrilled to see this bill before your committee. If passed, this bill will help me further lesson the carbon footprint of our farm and greatly increase our

opportunities to sell raw milk to our greater community.

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,

Brett Zimmerman