

Submitter: Nora Lyman

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources

Measure: SB85

I am a newly arrived Oregonian with roots on both sides of my family in this state, and I urge you to support a moratorium on factory farms, SB 85. As a child I traveled with my family to Southern Oregon every year to visit my grandfather's farm, some of the happiest times we had as kids, and I developed a great fondness for small farms (even feeding the chickens!). As a new resident, Oregon's local food system is still very important to me. We must protect our independent family-scale farmers, and new emerging farmers, from the harms of mega-scale corporate factory farms.

Three decades ago, Oregon was home to more than twice as many smaller scale dairies as it is today. From 1992 to 2017, the number of small dairies (fewer than 200 cows) fell by two-thirds. 44 of Oregon's 500+ confined animal feeding operations are already mega-sized, and this 8% of the operations confines nearly 60% of the total farmed animals. Further consolidation will only make it impossible for smaller independent farmers to compete.

We need to learn from the mistakes of other states whose communities suffer from drinking water pollution and decreased health and quality of life. We can't allow Oregon to become the next hotbed for factory farms. Urgent action is needed to protect Oregon from the harms posed by these industrial facilities. I have lived where mega-farms have wreaked havoc on farmers, consumers, the land, and livestock, and it is tragic.

Oregon is now a target for these mega-sized operations, particularly as neighboring states increase their environmental protections. There are current proposals for re-opening the disastrous Lost Valley mega-dairy in Morrow County and for several mega-chicken operations in the prime farmland of Willamette Valley.

Factory farms also use a lot of water, even in places with increasing scarcity and drought. They can use as much water as a small city but generate many times the waste. Manure and other contaminants (like heavy metals, drugs, and pathogens) leach into groundwater and runoff into surface water, making our waters dangerous for wildlife and people. Our current laws to protect water quality and quantity are not sufficient to stop this industry from harming our communities and ecosystems. As a voter and responsible citizen I urge you to pass SB 85.