

Chair Golden and Committee,

During my education in the College of Forestry at Oregon State University I remember distinctly a professor telling us that natural resource policy is generally made based on feelings, not science. In the years since, I have seen that happen over and over in all aspects of resource management whether in forestry, wildlife or agriculture.

I am a fifth generation Oregonian. In those generations of Oregonians there are forestry professionals and loggers, farmers and ranchers. My family still lives on two separate properties in Douglas County that have been handed down over generations.

I currently raise sheep on small parcels around Roseburg. While I have never had a confined feed operation, both my grandparents and great grandparents raised chickens and produced eggs in chicken houses. The design for those chicken houses came straight from the US Department of Agriculture and we still have the brochures showing how to “blackout” the chicken houses for WWII. Two of those structures are still standing, and provided hours of fascinating exploration for me as a child.

I’ve read several of the testimonies supporting SB 85 and the thing that strikes me, is the disconnect between the people in favor of this bill and the realities of agricultural production. I went to the Oregon Department of Agriculture’s website to verify that I knew what I thought I knew. That is - Oregon has a valid process for permitting confined feeding operations. Those operations can be located on agricultural lands which have been long designated by the state. There are rules about effluent generated from confined feed operations. There are public notice/participation requirements for activities in confined feed operations.

The testimonies in favor of this bill are regurgitating false information in the hopes that if they say it enough, it will become true. They use the term factory farms for all confinement feed operations and imply that all of these are owned by big bad “corporations.” In fact, many family farms are corporations because that is the best legal tax structure in which they can operate. Confinement feed operations must file water plans and waste management plans. They are not willy-nilly taking water and discharging waste into streams. If they are, there are rules and oversight in place to deal with those transgressions.

A moratorium on confinement feed operations is not the answer to anything. Such a decision would penalize producers that are following the rules and providing much needed food for Oregon. We have seen what a delicate balance this nation has in the food chain. Making it more difficult for farmers to raise animals simply increases the cost of food. There have been several comments that somehow confinement feed operations cause undue harm or a disparity for low-income people or environmental injustice. The simple fact is this: most people get their food from confinement operations. Milk, eggs, pork, chicken and a lot of beef come from confinement feed operations. Most people can’t afford the “free range, organic, pasture raised” options. Nor can farmers that provide those options produce enough food for all Oregonians.

I am fortunate enough to be able to raise my own lamb to eat. I also am fortunate enough to be able to buy a whole beef in December and am fortunate enough to have a freezer to store it in. Not everybody in Oregon can do that. I buy my pork, chicken, eggs and milk at the grocery store (usually whatever is the cheapest - just like most Oregonians). My milk comes from Umpqua Dairy, so I know that the milk comes from Oregon. My eggs come from Willamette Egg Farms, which is in Oregon. In both cases I assume that

those products are coming from confined operations under the rules of Oregon Department of Agriculture. The chicken and pork I buy don't likely come from Oregon and they are likely grown in confinement operations. I have at least some level of trust that the producers of my chicken and pork are following the rules of the USDA and their respective state departments of agriculture, because in this country all of that is overseen by some government agency. Agriculture is not the wild west – it is regulated and overseen.

I urge you to look at the facts in this matter and not let feelings with no basis in reality sway your decision. I urge you to oppose SB 85.

Sarah Schartz