

Chair Golden & Senators of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources,

Please register my support for SB 85.

I am a vegetable-crop farmer near the site known as Evergreen Ranch in Jordan, Scio which plans to raise 4.5 million meat chickens annually.

I want to emphasize that the broiler CAFOs proposed for my area rival in size with the largest chicken factories in the US. It is like concentrating multiple large CAFOs at each site. That is the issue to begin with: their massive size and therefore their impact.

No one should be able to start such massive-scale operations from scratch without consultation with the existing community.

Because of the size of these operations, I am concerned for my health, quality of life, my property value, and my ability to maintain my farming income to support my family. I am also concerned about the social, economic, and environmental health of my community.

My two most significant concerns deal with water viability and air quality.

The creek we irrigate from is ankle-shallow in the summer. By August, irrigating our crops is already dicey. It doesn't matter that we're technically upstream from the Evergreen site. The watermaster could shut off our irrigation in the summer if the creek runs too low. Our well runs shallow and slow in the summer. Water supply is limited in our area in the summer. I'll also mention Thomas Creek is one of the most pristine waterways in Oregon. Shouldn't we want to protect that from airborne contaminants and drainage contamination?

I have so much more to say about the water implications for us locals, but I also want to touch on air quality issues. There is documented and consistent research that chicken factories emit toxic gasses and particulate matter. Ammonia, hydrogen sulfide, and PM10 particulates are readily absorbed in the human respiratory system and lead to chronic lung disease, as well as migraines and loss of sleep. And guess who the emissions are no good for either? The chickens. That is why the barns are vented, all the air is extracted and pushed outside with great big fans. That is all the science and technology going on here: big fans that suck the air inside and push it outside where it floats on the air and drops down in a shower of invisible but lethal particulate matter and ionized ammonia, all mostly within 0-3 miles of the site, that will go on completely unregulated.

In 2019, the APHA (the American Public Health Association, the largest organization to represent health professionals in the world) issued a well-researched [warning about the deleterious effect of CAFOs](#) on nearby communities. Let me quote a passage from their statement:

“Workers and community members living near CAFO operations face increased exposure to air pollution from these operations, which can cause respiratory conditions including asthma, eye irritation, difficulty breathing, wheezing, sore throat, chest tightness, nausea, bronchitis, and allergic reactions. Toxic air emissions include particulates, volatile organic compounds, and gasses such as hydrogen sulfide and ammonia. Odors associated with air pollutants from large-scale operations have been shown to interfere with daily activities, quality of life, social gatherings, and community cohesion and to contribute to stress and acute increased blood pressure. It is important to note that many of these risks are borne disproportionately by low-income communities where CAFOs are often clustered [...] raising serious social and environmental justice concerns.”

Evergreen Ranch is sited within half a mile of the Lourdes Charter School, a phenomenal public charter school that has been a consistent passport to further study for Scio children for almost 125 years. Who would think it is acceptable to—suddenly and permanently—place the school’s students in harm’s way? It would be an incalculable loss for our community to see this school close its doors because of air-quality issues.

SB 85 gives us a chance to consider what new rules and regulations need to be put in place to protect Oregon’s resources for the use, health and enjoyment of the many from their exploitation by a few Agribiz conglomerates.

*Reference:*

<https://www.apha.org/Policies-and-Advocacy/Public-Health-Policy-Statements/Policy-Database/2020/01/13/Precautionary-Moratorium-on-New-and-Expanding-Concentrated-Animal-Feeding-Operations>