Submitter: Isabella OConnor

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources

Measure: SB85

Please support SB 85 for the following reasons:

AIR AND WATER QUALITY:
The EPA and USDA have determined that Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations— commonly called 'factory farms'— are ‘the largest cause of water quality impairment in our country’s rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, and reservoirs’ and that ‘they contribute to the impairment of approximately 37% of the nation’s surveyed rivers and streams.’ [1] This water pollution typically occurs when waste pits overflow, trucks carrying the waste leak or spill, stormwater carries the waste into drains, pipes or hoses carrying the waste burst or break, or when the CAFO chooses to dump their waste directly into surface water. [2] Factory farms also significantly pollute the air. This is because they blow ammonia and particulate matter into the air, do not treat or aerate their waste structures (resulting in extreme hydrogen sulfide exposure), and the waste is applied directly to fields which expose workers and residents to the toxic waste directly—often leaving an intolerable smell. [3] People living near factory farms have a significantly increased chance of developing “breathing problems, coughs, headaches, hydrogen sulfide poisoning, ammonia poisoning… and blue baby syndrome.” Id. Finally, factory farms contribute to climate change by emitting incredibly high levels of methane and nitrous oxide. [4] Shockingly, CAFOs contribute to 7% of all greenhouse gas emissions. [5]

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE
Factory farms are typically built in rural areas with little opportunity for economic growth. [6] As a result, community members will typically support CAFOs, because they believe the job opportunities will outweigh the negative consequences to their environment and health. Id. Sadly, “many have found that [economic] gains have failed to materialize… and CAFOs have acted as a deterrence to new and further development, [as well as] decreasing property values.” [7] In addition, housing so many animals in a concentrated area lowers production costs, and results in higher profits for companies and cheaper meat products for consumers. [8] However, given the environmental damage, the decreased property value, and the increases in medical expenses from pollution-induced illnesses, the economic benefits of CAFOs are far outweighed by the harm they cause. [9] Additionally, the Union of Concerned Scientists has reported that not only are CAFO alternatives just as cost-effective from using traditional analyses, but alternatives would be even more efficient given the various negative externalities discussed above. [10] CAFOs are an environmental justice issue. Research has shown that CAFOs are disproportionately located in low-income communities with high minority presence. [11] As a result, CAFO pollution

directly impacts those who are least likely to have the resources to escape, organize against the project, or take legal action.

ANIMAL WELFARE
Oregon has progressive, humane values. Yet farmed animals in industrial-scale settings suffer immensely. In order to economize production for maximum profits, birth, life, and death for animals in factory farms is agony. Animals have very few opportunities to move around (if they are even able to), and sadly, many live in their own feces.

Thank you for reading!

[1] Jennine Kottwitz et al, Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations, 6.2 Sustainable Development Code (2021), https://sustainablecitycode.org/brief/concentrated.
[2] Sierra Club Mich. Chapter, Why are CAFOs Bad?, https://www.sierraclub.org (2017).
[3] Kottwitz
[4] Sierra
[5] Id.
[6] Kottwtiz
[7] Id.
[8] Union of Concerned Scientists, CAFOs Uncovered: The Untold Costs of Confined Animal Feeding Operations, 1, 20 (2008).
[9] Kottwitz
[10] Union of Concerned Scientists at 23-25.
[11] Ji-Young Son et al, Distribution of Environmental Justice Metrics for Exposure to CAFOs in North Carolina, National Library of Medicine, Environ Res, (2021