

March 3, 2023

Chair Golden and members of the committee:

My name is Randy Bentz and I am an owner and operations manager for Blue Den Ranch LLC, a family-owned tree farm located 7 miles east of Scio. Our family has been a part of the Jordan community for almost 60 years. Our community and neighbors are very important to us and I am writing to show our support for SB 85-1.

While we support rural development and are generally not opposed to CAFO in principle, we believe that the recent introduction of several large poultry operations in the area present serious challenges to our local air and water quality as well as our quality of life. The proposed Foster Farms chicken grow facility, located 2 miles from our property and upstream from us on Thomas Creek, is a prime example of this. The potential runoff from this operation could put unacceptable levels of BOD in our stream and negatively impact surface water quality across our community, including the new Linn County Park at the Hannah Covered Bridge, built on land donated to the county by our family. The decomposition of the manure and offal from the very large number of birds that can be grown at this facility will create an unacceptable environmental nuisance, which will severely impact our neighbors, our community and our local elementary school. The truck traffic necessary to support this facility, estimated at 2-3 dozen tractor-trailers per day, will completely outstrip the capacity of the steep, 2-lane county road which is the only access to the location. The massive amount of ground water needed to maintain millions of birds will deplete the local water table and negatively impact neighboring farms.

Exclusive Farm Use (EFU) zoning rules provide excellent flexibility and protection for farmers against encroachment and spurious complaints, but they were generally written with smaller family-type farm operations in mind, mainly because Oregon, especially the Willamette Valley, does not have an extensive history with the large CAFO common to other states. We believe these large, out-of-state poultry operators are using our somewhat permissive EFU rules to introduce a new type of industrial agriculture to our state and region that has a much larger negative environmental impact than our family

farm tradition. The State of Oregon and its legislature must study and understand these impacts before allowing large CAFO proliferation throughout the Willamette Valley.

We support SB 85-1 because we believe it is prudent to approach this challenge with eyes wide open and make the correct management decisions that protect our environment and traditions while keeping the door open for rural development opportunities. We ask you to support SB 85-1.

Randy Bentz
Owner/Operations Manager
Blue Den Ranch, LLC.
Scio, OR 97374