

Submitter: Chris Cozart

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources

Measure: SB85

Chair Golden and Members of the Committee,

Almost 20 years ago I moved my young family to Dayton to work on a poultry farm. Being a grass seed farmer, raising chickens was a completely new experience. My boss, Mark Firestone, was in the process of building 3 new poultry houses to the 8 in operation on his main farm, and also leased a farm of 4 houses down the road. He explained the process to me as, "We raise a 5 1/2 lb bird in 6 weeks, versus when I first got my start 30 years ago it was only a 4 1/2 lb bird in 6 weeks".

What I have come to learn is how much technology and science has improved the process of raising chickens. He has since passed away, and through upgrading to state-of-the-art equipment we now raise a 6 1/2 lb bird in these same chicken barns. This summer my family and I have the opportunity, through him, to purchase this farm; I have raised my 3 sons on this farm, they have learned to work right alongside of me since they could walk, and this is a way of life we are all proud of. We have always complied with all aspects of our CAFO permit...having current plans filed with the appropriate state and federal offices, submitting soil, water, and manure samples for testing, extensive record keeping and having our farms inspected annually by the Oregon Department of Agriculture.

The changes being proposed here are going to put owning this farm for ourselves in jeopardy. The current CAFO permits meet not just Oregon requirements, but federal also. They do their job in protecting soil and water quality. Farmers are not only under pressure to sustainably produce food products for a growing population, but they are also scrutinized by how they are doing it...by people who have no clue what it takes to produce their food. Over-regulating a system that is not broke is not going to help with food production. How are you going to reduce Oregon's carbon footprint when you have to import the food for Oregonians to consume, instead of allowing it to be produced here locally on farms like mine?