



Oregon State Legislature  
Senate Committee on Natural Resources  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

March 6, 2023

RE: Senate Bill 85, Relating to the study of confined animal feeding operations

Dear Chair Golden, and Members of the Senate Natural Resources Committee,

On behalf of more than 74,000 members and supporters of the Oregon Chapter Sierra Club, we are writing in strong support of a factory farm moratorium in the state through the passage of SB85.

The State must take immediate action and halt the expansion of factory farming in Oregon. Until 1. proper protections are in place for our shared natural environment, 2. concern is placed on animal welfare, 3. focus is given to the value of local family farms and ways to support them are found, and most importantly that 4. frontline communities who bear the brunt of impact are most considered.

It is our view that all 4 of these concerns are interconnected and through this study we will make decisions based on facts, data, logic, and our Oregon values.

### **Environment**

Did you know that factory farms are currently draining and polluting the state's water resources? Oregon's 11 mega dairies consume 8.2 million gallons of water in a single day. That's almost 12,500 Olympic sized swimming pools! In addition to depleting resources, nitrates from fertilizers used and massive amounts of manure created then infiltrate local groundwater, threatening the health and safety of those in frontline communities surrounding the area.

In addition to the threat to water resources, the threat to air quality is another major concern. Factory farms fuel the acceleration of climate change through their release of harmful and dangerous emissions of greenhouse gasses such as methane and nitrous oxide. One ton of manure from a large dairy farm produces more than twice as many greenhouse gas emissions as one ton of manure from a small dairy farm due to manure management practices. The release of airborne particulate matter from the waste concentrated on factory farms has been found to be linked to asthma, bronchitis and



other respiratory diseases. Nationally, over 12,000 premature deaths have been caused by factory farm air pollution.

### **Animal Welfare**

Oregon has progressive, humane values and we believe that we can have high quality, locally sourced food, raised and cared for in humane ways. Yet factory-farmed animals, especially in industrial-scale settings, suffer immensely. Chickens are confined along with their ammonia-filled litter, leading to ulcerated feet, feather loss, blisters, tumors, osteoporosis, and more. Cattle and Hogs on their way to slaughter are oftentimes deprived of water and care as they are already viewed as meat and not animals. However, in many family farms, animal welfare is at the heart of their operations. Animals are treated with care and respect as they support these families through their sale. We believe that Oregon can do better and should.

### **Family Farms**

Not only do family farms focus on animal welfare practices, Family farms also enhance rural economic stability and provide the foundation for thriving and vibrant rural communities! In the eight years following the state's largest mega-dairy began operations in 1999, more than 600 small-scale dairies went out of business. Imagine an Oregon where Oregonians are feeding Oregonians, where it's not a matter of just knowing where your food comes from but of the care and pride that went into it.

### **Frontline Communities**

The working conditions on factory farms are typically dangerous. Workers from these frontline communities are often subjected to hazardous chemicals, fumes, and particulate matter. In addition to the detrimental health factors imposed on these communities, many of Oregon's largest dairy factory farms are found in rural Latinx communities, where they disproportionately suffer the adverse effects of these factory farms.

We urge you to vote Yes on SB 85 and place a factory farm moratorium to protect Oregonians from cancer-causing drinking water and toxic air quality that threaten the health of our local communities.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Dix, Chair  
Legislative Committee  
Oregon Chapter Sierra Club