

Submitter: Joseph Duman
On Behalf Of: Communities targeted by mega-poultry-CAFOs
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources
Measure: SB85

I write to express my deep concern regarding very large poultry CAFOs that are currently being proposed in several areas, including my hometown of Jordan, OR (Linn County, unincorporated). Though Oregon has a strong tradition of supporting its farmers, I believe that large corporate interests are seeking to exploit this tradition and are likely to do grave ecological and societal harm thereby. For example, the Evergreen Ranch site in my hometown would host 4.5 million birds per year on a small bluff immediately above Thomas Creek, which empties into the Willamette River via the South Santiam River. This is unprecedented in this watershed, as locals have pursued much lower-impact agriculture for well over 100 years. Due to the concentrated nature of both nitrogen and phosphorus in poultry waste (relative to, for example, cattle waste), this site is likely to have grave consequences on the watershed, as evidenced by the tragic dead zones of the Chesapeake Bay, to which large poultry CAFOs are major contributors. Volatile nitrogen species (e.g., ammonia) and bacterial contamination of groundwater other other risks of these large industrial agricultural CAFOs, and both have been confirmed to be real human health risks in peer-reviewed research. All of these risks are clearly differentiated from those of other CAFOs, by the biological differences between birds and mammalian livestock, e.g. cattle, and a preponderance of data suggests that the poultry waste is, pound-for-pound, more dangerous. The Evergreen Ranch CAFO would also put an unfair and unjustifiable stress on the limited groundwater in its locale, a situation for which surely other industries would receive far greater scrutiny. How would any of Oregon's communities fare if the representative of a large corporate interest were allowed to pollute its air and water, also depleting the latter, without consequence? Indeed, I would not wish this fate even on those communities that, likely due to lack of contact and complete information, I believe that I dislike. I understand that many of Oregon's farmers, or the organizations that presume to speak for them, are highly suspicious of any efforts to regulate their industry beyond current mores and norms. This is, alas, perhaps justified. However, I ask the Senate Committee on Natural Resources to see beyond this. I do not believe that the Committee wishes to disrupt or destroy the state's proud tradition of agriculture, and I understand that CAFOs in some form are required to provide needed meat and dairy. However, the legislature need not allow Oregon and Oregon's communities to be subjected to the environmental and human health horror that has marked the poultry CAFO industry in many parts of the United States. Oregon has an opportunity to be a model for balancing these needs, for learning how to do CAFOs correctly, so that communities and the environment do not pay the price for production, so that those who profit from the industry bear the costs of their industry's footprint, and so that a more sustainable future is created for all. Those whose lives and livelihoods will be most jeopardized

by the rash expansion of this industry are asking for a fair hearing, which by necessity must be thorough and open. What would you be able to tolerate in your own neighborhood? Isn't there a better way? At least let us learn from the communities, from those who study the environment and the water supply, and other stakeholders (including Oregon's smaller poultry farmers), and not give privileged ear to a multibillion dollar industry whose behavior toward their neighbors across the nation and toward the environment reeks of contempt.