

Submitter: Michelle Graas

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources

Measure: SB85

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

I strongly support a moratorium on factory farms, mega-dairies, and all similar businesses in Oregon.

As a Portland resident, it might be thought that factory farms don't affect me directly – but they do. Factory farms drain and pollute our water, deplete and contaminate our soil, and foul our air: in fact, the 11 mega-dairy facilities that already operate in Oregon produce over 17 million kilograms of methane gas every year – equivalent to the emissions from 318,000 passenger vehicles.

Factory farms are bad for our economy as well. In the eight years after the state's largest mega-dairy began operations in 1999, more than 600 small-scale dairies went out of business. That was nearly 25 years ago, and we've added another 10 mega-dairies since then. How many more farms have we lost in that time? Small family farms play a critical role in our economy and our society: they enhance rural economic stability and provide the basis for thriving and vibrant rural communities. Factory farms extract our environmental, economic, and human resources.

Most importantly, factory farms endanger Oregonian lives. The presence of deadly pathogens like avian influenza ("bird flu") and H1N1 ("swine flu") and the indifference to workplace safety regulations create hazards for us all, but the concentration of harm and potential for harm in the Latino/Latina communities in which these factory farms are frequently located is shockingly unjust.

I urge you to vote for SB85 to protect our climate, environment, rural communities, and family farms.

Thank you for your time and for your service to the state of Oregon.

With best wishes for a productive legislative session –

Michelle Graas