

RE: SB 85 — Support

Dear Chair Golden and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to urge you to pass SB 85 to study confined animal feeding operations.

Factory farms harm our communities. They create an outsized proportion of greenhouse gas emissions, cause water and air pollution, ride roughshod over the welfare of animals, and crowd family farms out of business.

Factory farms also use a lot of water, even in places with increasing scarcity and drought. Manure and other contaminants (like heavy metals, drugs, and pathogens) leach into groundwater and runoff into surface water, making our waters dangerous for wildlife and people.

Despite this,, Oregon’s regulatory controls are weak or nonexistent. We must protect our air and water as well as the the health and well-being of surrounding neighbors —and the animals subjected to these conditions. Our current laws to protect water quality and quantity are not sufficient to stop this industry from harming our communities and ecosystems.

Oregon is now a target for these mega-sized operations, particularly as neighboring states increase their environmental protections. Environmental justice is another important factor. Low-income people and communities of color disproportionately suffer the adverse effects of factory farms. Some of Oregon’s largest factory dairy farms are in rural Latinx and Hispanic communities, and they have limited to no power under current laws to say “No” to a factory farm moving in. Instead, let’s protect independent family-scale farmers and new emerging farmers from the harms of mega-scale corporate factory farms.

All of that being said, this bill directs a *study*. The findings of the study will inform future actions, but the study itself is an educative tool. That can only help any given situation.

Please do what you can to pass this bill into law.

Thank you for your consideration,
Susan Mates