



Tillamook County Board of Commissioners

201 Laurel Avenue, Tillamook, OR 97141

Phone: 503-842-3403

Cell: (503) 701-1235

dyamamoto@co.tillamook.or.us

David Yamamoto, Commissioner

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SB 85 Opposition Testimony

Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Girod, members of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources, thank you for this opportunity to testify before you today in opposition to SB 85 relating to Confined Animal Feeding Operations. For the record, I am Tillamook County Commissioner David Yamamoto.

Being from Tillamook County, I am familiar with many aspects of dairy operations and even more familiar with the many multi-generational dairy families who reside, own businesses, provide family wage jobs, attend church, volunteer, donate time and dollars, and contribute to their communities in so many ways that helps build the social fabric of our small rural coastal county.

Our family farmers in Oregon value a healthy environment, their employees, their animals, and our communities. Oregon dairy families care for 126,000 cows across thousands of acres of land in 20 of Oregon's 36 Counties, on dairies large and small.

Milk is the official beverage of the State of Oregon. The state consistently ranks among the best in the nation for milk quality, which supports the production of award winning cheeses, ice cream, yogurt, butter, fluid milk and much more. Approximately 70% of dairy products made in Oregon are consumed outside of the state, including domestic and international markets. Milk is Oregon's fourth most valuable commodity after only cattle, greenhouse and nursery products, and hay. In terms of agricultural exports, dairy products are Oregon's fifth most valuable commodity after seeds, fruits and nuts, wheat, and vegetables. Oregon farms help to feed not only Oregonians, but this Nation and the World.

Upon becoming a member of the National Assn of Counties several years ago, I was humbled to be appointed to the Environment, Energy and Land Use Steering Committee. During my many trips to Washington DC for the annual NACo Legislative Conferences, I have been humbled at the recognition brought to Oregon by the nationally acclaimed dairy products produced by the Tillamook Creamery. This national recognition should make every Oregonian proud and something we need to wholeheartedly support.

Many years ago, before my becoming a Commissioner, I was involved in the formation of a grass-roots organization in Tillamook County now known as Tillamook Working Lands and Waters Cooperative. Our mission is to educate everyone on the ways water quality in particular is managed in today's modern dairy, timber and fishing industries. We have been extremely successful by providing tours to the general public, Commissioners from across the State of Oregon, NOAA Fisheries, and last summer, the House Committee on Energy and Environment. The story I am proud to tell over and over again is this: when it comes to clean water, habitat restoration and fish recovery, no Oregon County does this better than Tillamook County. DEQ backs up my statements by recognizing the great improvements in water quality in Tillamook County rivers and streams.

For over a decade, special interest groups have aimed to curb Oregon's dairy industry by proposing limitations on Confined Animal Feeding Operation permits. These CAFO permits are partnerships with Oregon DEQ and administered by Oregon Dept of Agriculture. Dairy operations are also regularly inspected by USDA, Oregon Water Resources Dept, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, USDA National Resource Conservation Service, Soil and Water Conservation Districts as well as many others. In rare instances where dairies have sought to circumvent Oregon's permitting requirements, our regulatory structure has worked both to cease those operations and prevent ecological harm. Our current system works and works well.

Increased limitations to CAFO permits are less about using facts around regulatory gaps and more about choosing to look only at a farm's size, not a farm's values and a farm's animal and environmental outcomes. It is important to note, that the cost of regulatory compliance is not free. Dairy is not a business where farmers can set their price based on the cost of doing business. The economics of the dairy business are extremely challenging. Yet through all of this, Oregon's dairy industry is not a threat to water quality, animal welfare or public health. Instead, our dairy farmers know it is good business to follow their values in protecting the environment, supporting community and promoting healthy animals...all while providing Oregon's economy with a \$9.7B total economic impact, 13,000 direct jobs, and over \$500M in wages.

Oregon's dairy farms are critically important to Oregon and many of our Counties. SB 85 threatens to limit the growth and flexibility of our multi-generational family farms for reasons that are not well reasoned. Limiting CAFO size will lead to increasing reliance on imported milk while the dash 1 amendment will prohibit existing tier-2 CAFO's from renewing their permits forcing family farms to close. We must support our dairy farms and farmers and I ask you to join me in opposing SB 85.

Respectfully submitted,



David Yamamoto
Tillamook County Commissioner