

Submitter: Jennifer Sprague

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources

Measure: SB85

Chair Golden and Members of the Senate Natural Resources Committee, I grew up in Oregon and I currently live in Salem. I am writing as a volunteer with Food & Water Watch. I support SB 85, a factory farm moratorium in Oregon, because I care about our rural communities, our family farms, the animals raised on those farms, and the quality of the water we drink and the air we breathe.

Small family farms enhance rural economic stability and provide the basis for thriving and vibrant rural communities. Oregon's small farmers have long been producing healthy, safe, and abundant food for Oregonians with more conscientious stewardship of the environment, our communities, and our food supply than factory farms.

Factory farms are pushing small farms out of business. In the eight years after Oregon's biggest mega-dairy, Three Mile Canyon Farm, began operations in 1999, more than 600 small-scale dairies in our state went out of business. The same could happen to our chicken industry very soon: Small family chicken farms could be pushed out of Oregon by the out-of-state corporations that are trying to build massive industrial chicken operations right here in the Willamette Valley.

Factory farms extract wealth from our rural communities; they won't help our rural communities thrive. We need to protect our family farms, and that means halting the spread of factory farming.

Factory farms fuel climate change by releasing harmful and dangerous greenhouse gases. Oregon's 11 mega-dairy facilities produce over 17 million kilograms of methane gas every year – the same as the emissions from 318,000 passenger vehicles!

Factory farms are also breeding grounds for disease. Due to unsanitary and cramped conditions, animals can carry and spread pathogens to humans, like the highly pathogenic avian influenza (bird flu) and H1N1 (swine flu). Humans cannot afford to increase our exposure to more and more deadly viruses.

I eat meat, and I care about animal welfare. Farmed animals in industrial-scale settings suffer immensely to economize production for maximum profits – profits that won't even stay in Oregon. Birth, life, and death for animals in factory farms is agony. We must stop the spread of factory farms.

I urge you to vote YES on SB85 in the 2023 legislative session to protect our climate, our environment, our family farms, farm animals, and our rural communities.