

Submitter: Megan Cozart

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources

Measure: SB85

Chair Golden and members of the committee,

I am writing today as a proud Farmer FOR Foster Farms who holds fully compliant CAFO permits, and I oppose SB 85-1.

Do you eat chicken? If you do, you too should support small family farms who produce an agricultural product for food consumption.

My family and I currently produce 2.1 million chickens annually in the heart of Oregon's Wine Country. Please read that again! We are not in some factory on the outskirts of oblivion as some would like us to be.

From my observation of this process, from work group to the committee today, it appears Poultry CAFO permits, and the actual ranch operations, are considered to be new to Oregon when, in fact, they are not. Oregon currently has 25 permitted Poultry Broiler operations...with 5 of them located in Yamhill County! There have been no complaints filed, no ill effects to Yamhill County's vast tourism industry! As responsible farmers, we work diligently to comply with not only our yearly CAFO inspections, but also monitor soil, water, and compost samples with yearly testing. In addition, we are part of a rotating random audit to ensure our birds are raised according to Healthy and Humane Standards and Guidelines. We are not a factory farm. We are not a processing plant. Like many of the other growers in our area, we are a small family farm contracted to raise an agricultural product. Our three boys grew up on our farm, and from the beginning they knew the birds came first. There have been vacations missed, activities cancelled, and being "married to the farm" because the welfare of our birds is top priority. There are nights slept in pickup trucks during storms to make sure the generators stay running when the powers out, state of the art food and drinking systems so they have the best possible quality, barns that are warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer than our own home, and even waking during the night to head to a barn to check because something "doesn't feel right". We are not the horrible pillagers of the land the opposition have made us out to be, and we do not have contamination issues with our soil, ground water and surrounding water table, including the 2 major rivers our farm sits on. Another misconception I've gathered from this work group is the matter of manure. After all, ultimately a CAFO permit is a manure management plan. Poultry manure is a dry litter and is highly sought after by grass seed farmers as an alternative economical and sustainable fertilizer that they spread on their fields. In fact, we continually have a waiting list of grass seed farmers wanting to purchase our litter. Our manure is contained inside a covered building, as required, where there is no potential for runoff.

With ever increasing populations and higher demand for food resources, this industry should be embraced for its contributions to the local food supply. More power to

those who can afford to purchase high dollar backyard raised food products, but kudos to the rest of us who can sustainably produce the quantity and value for the majority of today's consumers. I can proudly say my farm keeps over 125,000 people fed every year...not to mention every bi-product that comes after our birds go to processing leaving almost zero waste. However, that is only 125,000 people out of the roughly 13 million people that live in the Pacific Northwest! As you can see, we need more poultry farms!

This process has done nothing but take superficial testimony as facts, ignored federal and state standards already put in place, and completely vilified a safe and sustainable industry. I have to ask...where do you think your food comes from? Everywhere you look is the demand and push for locally raised food choices...how much more local can you get? Just like chocolate milk doesn't come from brown cows, your children's chicken nuggets don't just come from McDonald's.

Respectfully,
Megan Cozart