



March 15, 2023

To: Senate Natural Resources Committee

From: Alex Cerussi, Mercy For Animals

Re: Support for SB 85-1

Testimony in Support of SB 85-1

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

Mercy For Animals, a nonprofit organization with approximately 3,100 Oregon supporters and staff (including the undersigned, a Bend resident) dedicated to building a just and sustainable food system, urges this committee to support SB 85-1, legislation that would place a moratorium on permitting new and expanding factory farms.

Oregon has a vested interest in promoting the well-being of all animals. Notably, Oregon law recognizes that all nonhuman mammals are “sentient beings capable of experiencing pain, stress, and fear.”¹ The majority of farm animals on factory farms live almost their entire lives indoors, with nearly 40 percent of farms confining cows in cruel tie stalls barely larger than their bodies, rendering the animals unable to turn around.² Cows eat, sleep, urinate, defecate, and give birth in these stalls. They rarely have access to the outdoors and are prevented from expressing many natural behaviors, such as grazing.³ Intensively confined cows more often suffer from clinical diseases such as mastitis, metritis, and lameness. Chickens raised for meat also suffer similar ailments as a result of living in ammonia-filled sheds on waste-soaked litter.⁴ Bred to grow to market weight unnaturally fast, they can also suffer from debilitating leg disorders and impaired locomotion.⁵ Extreme confinement and poor welfare conditions do not align with Oregon’s humane values.

Factory farms also fuel the current climate crisis. Large factory farms release harmful and dangerous greenhouse gas emissions such as methane and nitrous oxide.⁶ They generate thousands of pounds of manure each year that can pollute nearby water with chemicals, heavy metals, and bacteria.⁷ Manure runoff from factory farms also threatens the health and stability of native wild ecosystems. Air pollution from factory farms jeopardizes the health and well-being of people working at or living near these facilities. No community should suffer health harms for private profit.

A moratorium would grant Oregon the time it needs to address existing environmental and animal welfare harms caused by large factory farms. We must do more to protect all Oregonians. **Accordingly, Mercy For Animals urges this committee to support SB 85-1.**

Sincerely,
Mercy For Animals

¹ ORS § 167.305(1).

² H.W. Barkema et al., *Invited Review: Changes in the Dairy Industry Affecting Dairy Cattle Health and Welfare*, 98 J. Dairy Sci., 7426 (2015).

³ R. Mandel, H.R. Whay, E. Klement & C.J. Nicol, *Invited Review: Environmental Enrichment of Dairy Cows and Calves in Indoor Housing*, 99 J. Dairy Sci., 1695 (2016).

⁴ Elizabeth Overcash, *Detailed Discussion of Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations: Concerns and Current Legislation Affecting Animal Welfare* (East Lansing: Michigan State University College of Law Animal Legal and Historical Center, 2011), animallaw.info/article/detailed-discussion-concentrated-animal-feeding-operations.

⁵ Toby G. Knowles et al., “Leg Disorders in Broiler Chickens: Prevalence, Risk Factors and Prevention,” *PLoS One* 3, no. 32 (February 2008): e1545, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2212134/>.

⁶ P.J. Gerber et al., *Tackling Climate Change Through Livestock: A Global Assessment of Emissions and Mitigation Opportunities* (Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2013), 15.

⁷ U.S. GAO, *Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations*, 5–6.



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