

Submitter: James Cole

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources

Measure: SB85

I write today to support SB85 as originally proposed and to oppose the suggested amendments to SB85 which would narrow its scope to poultry farms and repeal Section 1 on June 30, 2025. The purpose of the bill is for the protection of the health and safety of Oregonians. To neuter the bill beyond recognition is to send a strong message to people throughout the State that their wellbeing is worth nothing more than lip service. When I studied at Southern Oregon University, I was impressed with the passion that those around me had for the preservation of each other and the environment. I was likewise impressed with then-candidate Golden's care for the community he sought to serve. Now studying law at Lewis & Clark I have that same belief that the legislature can do what is right for the future of Oregon, but I know that in this instance it can and should do more.

Limiting the scope of this bill to apply only to poultry operations rather than all confined animal feeding operations is dangerous. With regard specifically to cattle farms, there are significant public health, environmental, and economic concerns.

Large-scale cattle farms like Threemile Canyon Farms are potentially dangerous because of the byproducts inherent in cattle rearing. Cow waste is commonly washed out into large bogs adjacent to the feeding operation where most dries up and is used as fertilizer and a significant portion seeps into the water table. When this water table is shared with nearby communities, any contaminants that persist in that water can harm the community. Many fluorinated and chlorinated substances could find their way to farms one way or another and bioaccumulate in cows. This is a concern that should be monitored for the Department of Agriculture's report in the form of PFAS testing at the very least. A lengthier prohibition would enable better testing to understand the impact CAFOs have in this regard. The risk posed by adopting the amendments is a very real and very preventable Love Canal.

The environment likewise stands to lose. With cattle farming operations ballooning up to and beyond 30,000 heads, the toll from the production of methane alone spells disaster for global warming. By continuing to allow permits to these operations the legislature steers our atmosphere into uncharted territory and therefore puts the State in jeopardy. Before permitting any more CAFOs, it is necessary to study the risks associated as the original bill was designed to do.

Oregon's small businesses hang in the balance. During COVID, small Oregon dairy farmers were unable to compete with their large CAFO counterparts. The result was that many family-owned businesses failed. Oregon's family owned farms have

supported Oregonians for well over a century. Allowing CAFOs to run these farms out of business risks a monopolization of Oregon's dairy industry where small farms and the end consumer will all lose in the long run. It is the responsibility of the legislature to protect its people from these harms.

Thank you for considering my testimony. The most recent proposed amendment is a win for nobody. It is insufficient to address any of the concerns this bill was drafted as a response to and the original bill should be promoted.