

Written testimony in support of SB 85 (with the -1 amendment)
82nd Oregon Legislative Assembly--2023 Regular Session

Dear Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources,

My name is Meghan Jones, and I have been studying and educating high school and college students in the greater PNW area on the impacts of CAFOS on people, animals, and the planet for the last 7 years.

In this time, I have seen how the lack of regulations for mega CAFOs have resulted in poisoned air and water that has put countless lives at risk in various states in our beautiful region. One doesn't have to look far, in fact, just across the Columbia River Basin we can see how the storage of manure at mega dairies has contaminated groundwater with nitrates that are extremely harmful to human health - especially for neighbors of these CAFOs. Because these mega-dairies are often exempted from federal regulations that hold other industries accountable for their contributions to air and water pollution, it is up to state legislatures to protect their constituents.

I have attended in person and virtually the hearings on SB 85 and have heard many family farmers plead for the committee members to protect their interests - local and native Oregonians - over the profits of international corporations that threaten both their livelihoods and their lives.

Those opposed, I have noticed, often state that this bill is being proposed out of "fear", and not "facts." Though I'd like to point out that we often don't have the facts to support the disastrous environmental and public health impacts that CAFOs have because they simply have not been studied or regulated. This proposed bill would solve that issue. And if the opposition is correct, and CAFOs pose no threat whatsoever to the environment or health of humans and animals, then they shouldn't be concerned, as business could continue as usual once those studies have been conducted and approved. Unfortunately, the studies that have been conducted, or in other words, the facts we do have, don't bode well for these industrial farms, or for those opposed to this moratorium.

The Pew Commission's 2008 Report, conducted by cattle ranchers, a former Secretary of the U.S. Dept of Agriculture, a state senator from North Dakota, and a former governor of Kansas, found that the massive amounts of manure created by these mega-CAFOs create environmental disasters such as contamination of waterways (including groundwater and well water) are a leading cause of eutrophication (algal blooms that deoxygenate water killing all life within it), and contribute massively not only to air pollution in the form of methane, but also in the release of particulate matter that comes with significant public health concerns for neighbors, who are often low-income and otherwise disadvantaged.

SB 85 does not call for the permanent end of these mega-CAFOs. Instead, it asks the legislature to consider the health and wellbeing of Oregonians, the animals housed in these

facilities, and the protection of our beautiful state. Imagine, for a moment, that this bill does not pass, mega corporations come into Oregon and build industrial farms all over our state, cutting down our trees, polluting our air and water, lowering our property values, making our people sick, and decimating our native biodiversity. This is a potential outcome if we don't assess the risks that these mega-CAFOs pose before they are built. It is easy to prevent an ecological disaster by taking the time to study the potential impacts. It is much harder, and sometimes impossible, to clean up the mess left behind by CAFOs in the event such a disaster were to occur.

I ask you, the honorable members of this committee, to prioritize the interests of your constituents, the people of Oregon, over the profits of a megacorporation. Listen to the family farmers who will struggle to compete and survive if these megacorporations move in. Listen to the concerns of environmental experts on the potential impacts of these industrial farms on our beautiful state. Read the science that shows that it is not just poultry farms that make an impact, and that in fact, cattle (raised for both beef and dairy) have arguably a much larger impact on the environment and therefore **MUST** be included in the scope of this research and moratorium.

The proposed new amendment that narrows the scope of SB 85 to only poultry and only prevents new tier 2 CAFOs from being introduced until 2025 does not accomplish the original stated mission of SB 85 to “prohibit the proliferation of industrial confined animal feeding operations until the impacts of industrial confined animal feeding operations, including impacts to air quality, climate, water quality, water supplies, small- and medium-sized livestock farms, community and worker health and animal welfare, have been adequately studied and addressed through laws and rules.” It would be a mistake, in my opinion, to overlook one of the leading causes of environmental degradation only to look the other way while corporations who do not value Oregonians or our land enter our state and destroy our land.

I urge you to support SB 85 with the original -1 amendment, and to reject the -3 amendment as it does not accomplish what we, the people of Oregon, need. Thank you.

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