



Support for SB 85

May 6, 2023

To: Chair Lieber, Vice Chair Knopp, Members of the Senate Committee On Rules

From: Russell Lum, Political Organizer, Oregon Nurses Association

Re: Support for Senate Bill 85-4 with improvements

Chair Lieber, Vice Chair Knopp, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony for Senate Bill 85 on behalf of the Oregon Nurses Association (ONA). ONA is a nurses union and professional association representing over 16,000 health care workers and providers, including registered nurses, advanced practice nurses, and allied health workers. Our members work in urban and rural hospitals, clinics, school-based health centers, home health care, and county health departments across Oregon.

In 2021, our Cabinet on Health Policy, who are nurses and the statewide leaders of ONA's policy decisions, voted to weigh in on the mega-dairy issue because of the overwhelming case that these large operations are harmful to our health. At that time, we joined as one of the organizations in the Stand Up to Factory Farms coalition.

With these partner advocates and many others, this session we've been asking the legislature to do the most it can to put health above the unsafe status quo of giant-scale agriculture industry.

We know things like:

- Drinking nitrate-contaminated water — a risk with nitrates from these operations' leeching into groundwater — has a relationship to increased colorectal cancer, thyroid disease, and infant disease.¹
- Ammonia in the air at a CAFO or in proximity to one can cause significant olfactory and respiratory damage, and is compounded in the harm this presents with asthma and the presence of particulate matter.²

¹ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6068531/>

² https://www.michigan.gov/-/media/Project/Websites/mdhhs/Folder1/Folder50/CAFOs-Chemicals_Associated_with_Air_Emissions_5-10-06.pdf?rev=ac7b6d7bb56c4b85a378ce8fb9a30442



While hand-in-hand with the American Public Health Association³ we support a moratorium policy, we also support stringent, promising regulation in the sector.

We appreciate this committee's concern to pass that kind of regulation this session. The -4 is progress and we ask it be made stronger in these areas:

1. The setback provisions from schools/residences should be state-law directed, not just allowable by counties which opt to codify these in their jurisdictions
2. Air pollution regulation instead of mere air quality study
3. The Nutrient Application Permit language is too broad in the current text. It is true that there should be more visibility of the nutrient application from CAFOs, especially when they produce much more waste than can be agronomically applied to their fields, and simply say that it will be "exported" in their permit documents
4. Strengthened protections for Groundwater Management Areas. The communities of Morrow and Umatilla Counties are facing a groundwater disaster from nitrate poisoning derived from factory farms. We need to make sure this does not happen to any other community in Oregon. This includes better groundwater monitoring and a way to revoke a permit if contamination is detected

ONA supports keeping Oregon healthy in the vein of producing food to a high air, water, and environmental standard. Please join us in this priority.

Sincerely,

Russell Lum

³ <https://www.apha.org/policies-and-advocacy/public-health-policy-statements/policy-database/2020/01/13/precautionary-moratorium-on-new-and-expanding-concentrated-animal-feeding-operations>