



To:

Oregon State Legislature
Members of the House Committee on Agriculture,
Land Use, Natural Resources and Water
900 Court St., NE, Salem, Oregon

From:

Matthew Dominquez
Executive Director
Compassion in World Farming

January 31, 2025

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express our strong support for Representative Hudson's bill, HB 2557 which will prohibit raising octopuses for human consumption in Oregon, addressing both animal welfare concerns and environmental impacts of intensive octopus farming.

As an alumnus of Lewis & Clark Law School, I am deeply concerned about the emerging global practice of octopus farming. This practice poses significant ethical issues due to the intelligence of octopuses and threatens Oregon's unique aquatic wildlife and coastline. On behalf of the thousands of Oregon-based supporters of Compassion in World Farming—a farmer-founded nonprofit committed to improving the lives of farm animals and creating a more sustainable food system—I emphasize that octopus farming is a harmful industrial agricultural practice that damages the health and well-being of people, animals, and the planet.

In recent years, there has been growing opposition to the development of octopus farming within the U.S. from scientists, animal protection and environmental organizations, and the public. States along the West Coast have pioneered and led legislative action on this important issue. In March 2024, Washington became the first state to ban octopus farming, quickly followed by California, which included a ban on the import of farmed octopus. There is significant momentum to prevent this practice from gaining a foothold in the U.S., and Oregon should continue its leadership on protecting animals and the environment by passing responsible, evidence-based agricultural policies, such as HB2557.

There is indisputable scientific evidence showing that introducing these animals into intensive production systems would not only be cruel but would also cause environmental damage. Compassion in World Farming published a report in 2021 titled “Octopus Factory Farming: A Recipe for Disaster,” which outlines the scientific evidence, summarized below.

It has been scientifically proven that octopuses are solitary animals by nature; therefore, they will not adapt to the high-density conditions typical of intensive production systems. Octopuses are highly intelligent animals that will be unable to express their natural behaviors when confined to sterile tanks and controlled environments. Most importantly, there is currently no scientifically validated method for the humane slaughter of octopuses. The planned method for slaughtering these animals is to place them in tanks containing ice water. This method—used for other aquatic animals like fish, without prior stunning—is inhumane, as it causes considerable pain, fear, suffering, and a prolonged, horrific death.

Additionally, intensive octopus farming presents several environmental challenges. Octopuses are carnivorous, necessitating diets rich in fish protein, which can exacerbate the depletion of wild fish stocks already under pressure from overfishing. The waste generated from such farming practices, including uneaten feed and excrement, can lead to nutrient pollution in surrounding waters, potentially causing harmful algal blooms and oxygen depletion, which adversely affect marine ecosystems. Additionally, the high energy and water consumption required for octopus farming contribute to its environmental footprint. The construction and operation of octopus farms can also disrupt local habitats, particularly if located near sensitive or protected areas, leading to habitat degradation and threats to biodiversity.

In light of the suffering involved and the environmental impacts in the farming and slaughter of octopuses, I respectfully ask the Members of the Committee to vote in favor of HB2557.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. Dominguez". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "M" and a long, sweeping underline.

Matthew Dominguez, JD
Executive Director,
Compassion in World Farming