

Submitter: Nikki Dennis  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB80

March 24, 2025

To: Senate Natural Resources Committee

From: Nikki Dennis

Re: Support for SB 80- to stop new or expanding large CAFOs in GWMA's

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

My name is Nikki, and I live in Portland.

I am writing to you today in support of SB 80. We must take action to halt the expansion of factory farming, defined by the Oregon Department of Agriculture as large CAFOs, in our state's groundwater management areas until contamination is brought down to safe levels.

- Oregon has progressive, humane values. Yet farmed animals, especially in industrial-scale settings, still suffer immensely as they spend their lives in overcrowded, cruel, and unsanitary confinement. Farms that prioritize access to pasture and the space to carry out natural behaviors should be the goal. This is especially crucial in the time of covid, bird flu, and other zoonotic diseases, some of which are yet to be discovered.
- Nitrate from fertilizers and manure pollutes groundwater and threatens the health of those who drink it. It can cause severe health problems for both people, animals, and ecosystems.
- We can no longer rely on intervention from the federal EPA to address this crisis, so our state elected officials need to do more to prevent pollution from contaminating our drinking water.
- In spite of public health and environmental concerns in the Lower Umatilla GWMA, ODA persisted in its approval for permitting the disastrous Lost Valley Mega-Dairy, a large tier 2 CAFO, in 2017. It is my understanding that Lost Valley eventually racked up over 200 environmental violations furthering the crisis in the Lower Umatilla Basin.
- Furthermore, I have learned that Governor Kotek's recent Executive Order which allows the Port of Morrow to violate its wastewater permit without even paying a fine, shows that once polluters get started, existing regulations aren't enough to protect communities. We need to prevent additional sources of pollution from moving into GWMA's in the first place.
- Factory farms fuel climate change by releasing harmful and dangerous

greenhouse gas emissions such as methane and nitrous oxide. Large CAFOs rely on unsustainable agricultural practices which produce massive amounts of manure, along with significant methane, ammonia, and nitrous oxide emissions. Shifting to regenerative, sustainable practices would create a resilient food system that prioritizes the health of our environment and our communities.

- Factory farms are an environmental justice issue. Many of Oregon's largest dairy factory farms are in rural Latinx communities, and these communities disproportionately suffer the adverse effects of these factory farms.

I urge you to vote for SB 80 to protect our precious water resources!