

3/24/25

To: Senate Natural Resources Committee

From: Jeff Alessandrelli

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

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

My name is **Jeff Alessandrelli**_____, and I live in **Portland, OR**.

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.

For many years I lived in Nebraska, near a factory farm. The experience drastically shaped my life and not for the better. I'm thus supporting SB-80 for the below reasons, among others.

Public Health

- Drinking nitrate-laden water can cause severe health problems, particularly in women and infants, such as certain types of cancers, blue baby syndrome, thyroid issues, and other adverse health effects.
- The large quantities of pollution concentrated on factory farms release airborne particulate matter linked to asthma, bronchitis and other respiratory diseases — nationwide, factory farm air pollution is responsible for [more than 12,000 premature deaths every year](#).

Current Regulatory Failure

- Preventing any new or expanding large CAFO would prevent new sources of pollution in GWMA which would give state regulatory agencies the time they need to address existing sources of pollution
- 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.
- Despite the Lower Umatilla Basin being designated a GWMA in 1990, regulatory agencies approved several permits allowing the creation and expansion of large CAFOs in the region, including two which have grown to become Oregon's largest mega-dairy and beef feedlot, collectively permitted to confine over 160,000k cows. While this bill would not result in any changes to these existing facilities, it would stop ODA from issuing any future large CAFO permits until the groundwater crisis is addressed.
- 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. As expected, Lost Valley eventually racked up over 200 environmental violations furthering the crisis in the Lower Umatilla Basin.
- 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 in the first place.

Rural Communities and Small Farms

- Small and mid-sized family farms enhance rural economic stability and provide the basis for thriving and vibrant rural communities.
- Factory farms concentrate profits to large corporations, driving small to mid-sized farms out of business by consolidating land and resources by reducing competition.
- Living near a large CAFO can drive down property values and make it difficult to sell your home.
- Factory farms externalize costs and force taxpayers to take on the burden of pollution clean-up and the cost of healthcare due to contaminated water.

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

Sincerely,
Jeff Alessandrelli