

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

Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Nash, and Committee Members:

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 (GWMA) until contamination is brought down to safe levels.

Fertilizer use and manure pollutes groundwater with nitrates and threatens the health of those who drink it. Nitrate contamination in the Lower Umatilla Basin GWMA continues to get worse in spite of being designated a GWMA 35 years ago. We need mandatory reductions in pollution and to prevent new sources of pollution, including factory farms, from being built in GWMA in the first place.

Preventing any new or expanding large CAFOs 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.

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.

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

Sincerely,
Michele Blankenheim