

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

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 James Newcomer, and I live in Lake Oswego.

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.

I am horrified that Nitrate from fertilizers and manure pollutes groundwater and threatens the health of those who drink it and that Nitrate contamination in the LUBGWMA continues to get worse despite being designated a GWMA 35 years ago. We need mandatory reductions in pollution, and we need to prevent new sources of pollution, including factory farms, from being built in GWMA in the first place.

In addition we know that drinking nitrate-laden water can cause severe health problems, particularly in women and infants – certain types of cancers, blue baby syndrome, thyroid issues, and other adverse health effects.

We also know that the large quantities of pollution concentrated on factory farms release airborne particulate matter linked to asthma, bronchitis and other respiratory diseases. In fact, nationwide, factory farm air pollution is responsible for more than 12,000 premature deaths every year.

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

Despite the urgency of these health concerns, I worry more about the effects of CAFOs on Climate and therefore on the question of whether human civilization can persist on this earth past our generation. We know that factory farms fuel climate change by releasing harmful and dangerous greenhouse gas emissions such as methane and nitrous oxide in extremely large quantities.

Shifting to regenerative, sustainable practices would create a resilient food system that prioritizes the health of our environment and our rural communities and small family farms. Small and mid-sized family farms enhance rural economic stability and provide the basis for thriving and vibrant rural communities. They can, and often do, produce healthier food for consumers as well. On the other hand, factory farms (CAFOs) concentrate profits in the accounts of large corporations, which drive small to mid-sized farms out of business by consolidating land and resources in monopoly organizations. And their products are often less healthy, or even more harmful, with the chemicals and growth-enhancers that are fed to confined animals to speed up production.

I urge you to vote for SB 80 to protect our precious water resources, our farmland, our vibrant rural communities, and the health of all of us here in Oregon.

Sincerely,

James Newcomer, Ph.D.  
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