

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

Hello,

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.

Animal Welfare

- * Oregon has progressive, humane values. Yet farmed animals, especially in industrial-scale settings, still suffer immensely as they spend their lives in overcrowded and unsanitary confinement.
- * Unlike industrial practices used by large CAFOs, small and mid-sized farms prioritize higher welfare standards, such as access to pasture and the space to carry out natural behaviors.
- * Chickens are confined along with their ammonia-filled litter, which leads to ulcerated feet, feather loss, blisters, tumors, osteoporosis, and more.

Current Regulatory Failure

- * Preventing any new or expanding large CAFO would prevent new sources of pollution in GWMA's 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 160,000 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's 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 animals and water resources!