

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

April 3, 2024

To: Senate Natural Resources Committee

From: Megan Sweeney

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 Megan Sweeney, and I live in Portland, Oregon.

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.

Nitrate contamination

Nitrate from fertilizers and manure pollutes groundwater and threatens the health of those who drink it.

Nitrate contamination in the LUBGWMA 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.

Well tests in GWMA show nitrate levels more than 11 times the EPA limit for safe consumption.

Protect our surface and drinking water from nitrate pollution and hold polluting entities accountable for their actions.

Climate

Factory farms fuel climate change by releasing harmful and dangerous greenhouse gas emissions such as methane and nitrous oxide.

One ton of manure from large dairy farms produces more than twice as many greenhouse gas emissions as one ton of manure from small dairy farms due to manure management practices.

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.

The social cost of CAFOs, especially in climate impacts, is far greater than any perceived benefit of this type of food system. Making these operations pay the real

cost would also make them much less profitable, allowing the market to regulate itself.

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.

Farmworkers and Frontline Communities

Factory farms force workers into unsafe working conditions. Workers are often subjected to dangerous working conditions and exposed to hazardous chemicals, fumes, and particulate matter.

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!

Sincerely,

Megan Sweeney