

Submitter: Chelsea Davis  
On Behalf Of: Animal Rights Collective Portland ARCPDX  
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and  
Wildfire  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB80

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

My name is Chelsea Davis and I live in Beaverton.

I am writing to you today in strong support of SB 80. We must take immediate action to halt the expansion of factory farming, as defined by the Oregon Department of Agriculture as large CAFOs, in our state's groundwater management areas (GWMAs) until contamination is brought down to safe levels.

For decades, nitrate contamination from fertilizers and manure has polluted groundwater, threatening the health of thousands of Oregonians. Despite the Lower Umatilla Basin Groundwater Management Area (LUBGWMA) being designated as a groundwater management area 35 years ago, nitrate contamination continues to worsen. Well tests in the area show nitrate levels more than 11 times the EPA limit for safe consumption. This contamination is not just an environmental crisis but a public health emergency. Drinking nitrate-laden water has been linked to severe health problems, particularly in women and infants, including certain cancers, thyroid disorders, and blue baby syndrome. Oregon cannot afford to allow further pollution from factory farms, which are among the largest contributors to this crisis.

Preventing new or expanding large CAFOs is a necessary step to curb additional sources of pollution. State regulatory agencies have repeatedly failed to prevent contamination. Despite the LUBGWMA designation in 1990, Oregon regulators approved several permits for large CAFOs, allowing operations that now confine over 160,000 cows. The catastrophic failure of Lost Valley Mega-Dairy, which amassed over 200 environmental violations, is a glaring example of the risks posed by these operations. Governor Kotek's recent Executive Order allowing the Port of Morrow to violate its wastewater permit without penalty further underscores the inadequacy of current regulations. Once pollution begins, enforcement has proven to be insufficient to protect communities. The only responsible course of action is to prevent additional factory farms from setting up in GWMAs until the contamination crisis is resolved.

Factory farms not only jeopardize water quality but also contribute significantly to climate change. Large CAFOs generate excessive methane, ammonia, and nitrous oxide emissions, fueling global warming. Their manure management practices result in more greenhouse gas emissions per ton of waste compared to small dairy farms. Shifting to sustainable, regenerative agricultural practices is essential to creating a

resilient food system that prioritizes environmental and community health.

Beyond environmental and health concerns, factory farms undermine rural communities and small farms. They consolidate land and resources, driving small and mid-sized farms out of business while externalizing the costs of pollution. Rural residents suffer declining property values, and taxpayers are left to shoulder the financial burden of pollution cleanup and healthcare costs stemming from contaminated water.

Oregon has long prided itself on humane values, yet industrial-scale factory farms subject animals to overcrowded and unsanitary conditions. Unlike small and mid-sized farms that prioritize higher welfare standards, large CAFOs confine animals in conditions that cause immense suffering. Chickens are housed in ammonia-laden environments, leading to severe health issues, while cows are forced into unnatural, high-production systems that compromise their well-being.

SB 80 is a necessary step toward protecting our water, climate, communities, and agricultural integrity. I urge you to vote in favor of this bill to safeguard Oregon's future.

Sincerely,  
Chelsea Davis