



April 3, 2025

Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire

Re: SB 80 – SUPPORT

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

Friends of the Columbia Gorge (“Friends”) is a non-profit organization with approximately 5,000 members. Friends is dedicated to protecting and enhancing the scenic, cultural, recreation, and natural resources of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (“National Scenic Area” or “Gorge”).

Friends strongly supports SB 80, which would halt the expansion of factory farming, defined by the Oregon Department of Agriculture as large confined animal feeding operations (“CAFO”), in our state’s Groundwater Management Areas (GWMAs). This is a needed step until contamination from CAFOs 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 Groundwater Management Area (LUBGWMA) continues to get worse despite 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 GWMAs in the first place. Preventing any new or expanding large CAFOs would prevent new sources of pollution in GWMAs 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.

Friends’ membership lives, works, and recreates in the Columbia River Gorge and is adversely affected by the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts caused by emissions from industrial CAFOs

that affect the National Scenic Area. The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area is already severely impaired by air pollution, especially particulate pollution. Mega-CAFOs in the LUBGWMA east of the Gorge are major contributors to this ongoing pollution. Because these operations have such an impact on the health and economy of the Gorge, Friends has taken an active role in addressing these issues.

Friends requests that you pass SB 80 and pause the approval of new or expanding mega-CAFOs in Oregon's GWMA's until the pollution issues can be addressed.

Sincerely,
Madison Kenney
Conservation Organizer