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34 Organizations Sign On in Support of Mega-Dairy Moratorium Bills

Stand Up to Factory Farms Releases Letter on Behalf of Thousands to Oregon State Legislature

Salem, OR - 34 organizations representing more than 100,000 members have signalled their support for bills in the Oregon House and Senate (HB 2924 and SB 583) that would enact a moratorium on mega-dairies in Oregon. The diverse array of organizations come from the worlds of conservation, worker rights, public health and social justice, among many others. They represent farmers, families, activists, and legal experts.

Introduced by Representative Rob Nosse (D-42) and Senator Michael Dembrow (D-23), the moratorium bills would stop the expansion of mega-dairies so their impacts on Oregon's air and water, rural communities, family-scale dairy farms and special places can be studied.

"We have trusted mega-dairies for too long with stewardship of Oregon's natural resources," said **Emma Newton, Oregon Organizer with Food & Water Watch and the Stand Up to Factory Farms Coalition**. "But that trust has been routinely abused. The failed Lost Valley Farm illustrated the devastating impact of unchecked mega-dairy pollution on local communities. Now, Easterday Farms' financial travails and allegations of fraud cast fresh doubt on its sister company's ability to keep the former Lost Valley site in the bare minimum of environmental compliance. We need to pause the expansion of mega-dairies until we can fix the enormous problems they create for the environment and communities of Oregon."

Mega-dairies extract large amounts of water from Oregon's rivers, streams, and aquifers, threatening an already scarce supply. Loosely regulated irrigation practices allow for the easy introduction of nitrate into the soil, polluting groundwater sources.

Factory farms also expose frontline communities to air pollution and hasten the impacts of climate change with enormous emissions of the greenhouse gas methane.

"Vast quantities of concentrated manure at mega-dairies pollute the air with dangerous gases, including the powerful greenhouse gas methane, and can contaminate surface and groundwater with nitrates, pharmaceuticals, and pathogens," said **Celeste Meiffren-Swango, State Director at Environment Oregon**. "We simply cannot allow these industrial factory farms to continue polluting in Oregon-- they are bad for our health, our climate, and our environment."

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“Frontline communities continue to pay a price. *Las comunidades en primera instancia continúan pagando el precio,*” **Oregon Rural Action Community Organizer Ana Elisa Wilson** said. “As Hispanics, we directly experience the harm to our water, air and health in Eastern Oregon. For 30 years, regulators have known of the high nitrate levels here in Morrow and Umatilla counties from large corporate farming. As essential workers, COVID-19 has also disproportionately affected us. We should not have to choose between good paying jobs and the long-term health of our families and communities.”

ADDITIONAL QUOTES BELOW:

“The concrete and metal barns of mega-dairies, where cows are confined by the tens of thousands, deny cows anything close to their psychological and physical needs,” said **Animal Legal Defense Fund Executive Director Stephen Wells**. “Mega-dairies are out of line with residents’ humane values, and it’s time for the state to pause and reconsider their place in Oregon.”

“Mega-dairies are also an enormous drain on Oregon’s rivers, streams and groundwater aquifers,” said **Brian Posewitz, a staff attorney at WaterWatch of Oregon**. “All told, a mega-dairy with 30,000 cows uses more water than the City of Bend.”

Stand Up to Factory Farms submitted the letter to the Oregon Legislative Assembly as the bill awaits a hearing and work session in the Senate Energy and Environment committee two days before the scheduling deadline.

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[Stand Up to Factory Farms](#) is a coalition of local, state and national organizations concerned about the harmful impacts of mega-dairies on Oregon’s family farms, communities, the environment and animal welfare. We seek legislation or an executive order establishing a moratorium on new mega-dairies and the expansion of existing mega-dairies until policies are in place that meaningfully protect our air, water, and climate and ensure the humane treatment of animals and the economic viability of family farmers.

“If the last year has taught us anything, it is that we have a deeply flawed industrial food system that continues historic racial injustices and threatens public health, both through the disproportionate impacts of pollution and the creation of dangerous pathogens that could be the next pandemic,” said **Amy van Saun, senior attorney with Center for Food Safety**. “Mega-dairies exemplify this broken system, and we must take a pause and ask ourselves what a just and healthy food system looks like in Oregon and strive for it. We cannot accept more business-as-usual.”

“Mega-dairies played a major role in driving Oregon’s family dairy farms off the land. They over-produce and flood the market with cheap milk, while externalizing their environmental and social costs, making it hard for small dairy farmers to compete. Forty years ago Oregon was home to more than 4,000 dairies, mostly small, family-owned businesses. [Now, just over 200 remain](#),” said **Amy Wong, Policy Director with Friends of Family Farmers**. “Friends of Family Farmers wants to level the playing field for the next generation of small dairy farmers, so they have a chance to thrive while contributing to a strong regional food system.”

“The growth of mega-dairies in Oregon is directly responsible for destroying small dairy farms, polluting our water and land, and are a major contributor to the worsening climate crisis. It’s past time for Oregon to put our people, farmed animals, and planet before profits. We need a mega-dairy moratorium this session.” **said Erin Eberle, Director of Engagement, Farm Forward**