

3/8/2017

Senate Committee on Environmental and Natural Resources
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: Senate Bill 197

Dear Senators,

My name is Dustin Welters and I am an agronomist in the Willamette Valley, and my wife is a dairy farmer in Scio, Oregon. I am writing you today to urge you to vote no on SB197 that would require the Environmental Quality Commission to adopt by rule a program for regulating air pollution from dairy confined animal feeding operations(CAFOs).

I have worked in and around the dairy industry for the past several years and can testify that Oregon dairy farmers are some of the best stewards of our land and waterways. As an agronomist I work closely with dairy farmers to monitor their soil nutrient levels and test their lagoon water to ensure that they are within a reasonable range. Though these tests don't necessarily relate to air quality, it goes to show the dairy industry in the United States and Oregon has never settled for less than the best and has consistently strived to implement better practices to reduce environmental impacts of dairy farming. According to the Western Dairy association "Today's dairies use 90 percent less cropland, produce 76 percent less manure, use 65 percent less water and 63 percent less carbon than a dairy did in 1944." That is drastic improvements and dairy farmers will only continue to become more innovative and environmentally friendly.

As I mentioned, my wife works on her family's 3rd generation organic dairy farm in Scio, Oregon where they milk 150 primarily jersey dairy cattle. Many people in favor of this bill will have you think that all CAFOs are large "factory farms" run by corporations that only care about profits. However, in reality a CAFO can be as small and smaller than my in-laws 150 cow dairy. My father-in-law, Jack Gourley, works tirelessly inside taking care of record keeping paperwork almost as much as he works outside to keep the cows fed and happy. More regulations imposed on dairy farmers like my in-laws will only make it harder for them to their jobs, causing the cost of production to increase, and stifle innovation and improvements.

I hope you consider what I have brought to you today and realize that this bill would not only impact large dairies like Threemile Canyon Farms, but also the local family farms that work hard everyday to bring delicious dairy products to the tables of Oregonians.

Sincerely,
Dustin A. Welters
Jefferson, Oregon