

From: Scott Beckstead
To: [SENR Exhibits](#)
Subject: Vote YES on SB 197
Date: Tuesday, March 07, 2017 9:41:34 AM

Dear Chair Dembrow and Committee Members:

In advance of my testimony on Thursday in support of SB 197, the dairy air pollution bill, I'm sending you an opinion article I wrote for The Oregonian in December. I believe it fairly states the position of The Humane Society of the United States and our members and supporters in Oregon on the subject of mega-dairies and the hazards they pose to animal welfare and the surrounding environment.

The HSUS strongly supports SB 197, and hope you will vote to refer the measure to the full Senate with a "do-pass" recommendation.

Thank you, and I look forward to speaking to you on Thursday.

Scott Beckstead

HSUS

Oregon officials should block mega-dairy in Boardman (Opinion)



A new proposal is calling for a mega-dairy in Boardman called Lost Valley Ranch, which would house around 30,000 cows. The Morrow County town along the Columbia River already has Threemile Canyon Farms, a large dairy and farming operation that manages 70,000 cows. (*Motoya Nakamura/2003*)



By [Guest Columnist](#)

December 16, 2016 at 7:10 AM, updated December 16, 2016 at 7:13 AM

Scott Beckstead

When given a choice about the future of Oregon's rural communities, which would you prefer: family farms raising animals more humanely and protecting the environment, or a factory farm confining 30,000 cows and producing massive quantities of waste that pollute the air and water?

It's not a tough choice, but it's one Oregon must make in the face of Lost Valley Ranch, a proposed mega-dairy in Boardman that, understandably, few Oregonians want.

Concentrated animal feeding operations, or "CAFOs," are notorious for environmental degradation and mistreatment of animals. Our state is already home to one of the nation's largest mega-dairies, Threemile Canyon Farms, which houses about 70,000 cows at any given point.

Concentrating so many animals in one location means the waste those animals produce is also concentrated and must be managed. An adult dairy cow produces about 80 pounds of manure and up to four gallons of urine daily, according to the U.S.

Department of Agriculture. Multiply that amount by the 30,000 cows proposed for Lost Valley Ranch dairy, and we're talking more than 3 million pounds of waste daily.

Waste from Lost Valley Ranch won't be treated in a waste water treatment plant, but instead will sit in vast open pits to decompose before being spread on neighboring farm fields. Decomposing animal waste is the source of more than 160 toxic gases, including hydrogen sulfide and carbon monoxide. Not only are those toxic gasses deadly at high concentrations, but they can diminish the quality of life for neighbors and threaten scenic regions.

As pervasive as the environmental problems associated with mega-dairies, the welfare of the animals is another reason not to support such a proposal.

The cows on this mega-dairy will live their lives largely on dirt, manure and concrete. Rather than grazing naturally, they will be fed a diet to maximize milk production. Their lives will consist of being pregnant, standing on concrete, giving birth, then being pumped-up with food and milked. When their bodies can no longer endure, their milk production will go down and they will be turned into hamburger.

Vast numbers of cows in Oregon are already consigned to such a fate, and we shouldn't allow the same mistreatment to befall tens of thousands more.

The sustainable agriculture community rejects mega-dairies since forcing huge numbers of animals to live in such bleak conditions is not sustainable, and large dairy operations have historically put smaller family farms out of business.

Oregon's elected leaders should know that bringing more factory farms into our state goes against the values of a broad majority of Oregonians, who want animals and the environment treated with greater respect. They also support family farmers who place a premium on animal welfare and environmental sustainability.

We're at a fork in the road, and the paths are dramatically different. One allows family dairy farms with a high regard for animal welfare and the environment to thrive. The other diminishes the quality of life for Oregonians, negatively impacts wildlife and its habitat, and denies 30,000 dairy cows a humane existence.

The choice is clear; we should urge the Oregon Department of Agriculture to reject the pollution permit that would allow for the construction of Lost Valley Ranch to move forward.

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