

PRESS RELEASE
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Reply to Response to Recent Concerns by Uproot Ashland



We are not opposed to the concept of a small family farm and many of us are even attracted to the idea of a meat CSA, if responsibly raised and certified organic. For example, [Willow Witt Ranch](#) is a local source of certified organic meats raised with sustainable farming practices in an appropriate setting. Organic certification is an arduous and expensive process. We have reason to believe that Uproot Ashland does not have organic certification. Notwithstanding, this proposal is not for a small farm. This land use permit with Jackson County is to expand this small-scale farm into a medium-sized confined animal feeding operation (CAFO) and slaughterhouse with 20,000 chickens per year (mostly in a confined space) and 40-50 hogs at a time or 300-400/year feeding and excreting on a steep slope. CAFOs are subject to EPA regulations, which must be addressed.

According to [National Hog Farmer magazine](#), the most important factor for success for this type of operation is proper site selection. "Good site selection should consider surrounding topography. Relatively level terrain, no obstacles, and areas with moderate to high wind velocity promote good odor dispersion. Confined valleys where sensitive sites are downslope of the facility are much more vulnerable." The proposed location meets none of these criteria. It is situated on a steep slope (around 36%, while 20% is technically considered to be steep). This fact alone introduces additional challenges and regulations that must be met to successfully

develop and operate such a facility without causing adverse effects to the soil, water, and air in the surrounding area. This property does not have pastureland where animals should be rotated on a regular basis. On the contrary, it is an eroded, unstable, porous hillside with an irrigation canal, multiple wells, springs, aquifers, and Tolman Creek just below. The hogs are in a small wire pen on a barren slope. Additional small wire pens may be created on the denuded slope in the future, but this is far from “hillside pasture”. Many of the trees that might have helped with erosion control have been eliminated by fire or excavation as can be witnessed from any direction. The Rogue Valley is a confined valley known to be subject to inversions. The proposed site is upslope of all other properties, which puts those below at considerable risk from environmental pollution. Studies on health effects from hog farms often use 5 kilometers as the study area because effects are not limited to adjacent properties, but spread to nearby communities.

Extensive excavation was done by the current owners to install a marijuana grow even though the property does not have water rights for a marijuana operation. The growing operation has since been discontinued and efforts have been redirected into establishing a CAFO and slaughterhouse on the hill. The property does not have irrigation access rights.

The property does not have electricity nor an easement to obtain electricity so the slaughterhouse will have to rely on generators and on solar power, which has yet to be installed.

The property has not developed its own access road making it accessible only by driving through the middle of two neighboring properties – one a winery and the other a farm. An increase in production will result in an increase in traffic disruptions for immediate neighbors.

Odor from pig farms has been a long contentious issue. Disputes and lawsuits about odors between pork producers and their neighbors date back to 1610 when an English court ruled that a hog farmer had to remove his pigs because their presence infringed on his neighbor's right to wholesome air. The court found that four elements were necessary in a home: habitation by man, pleasure of the inhabitants, necessary light and wholesome air. The Clean Air Act mimics the four things that the law sought to protect, even that long ago.¹ Odor from a pig and poultry farm could adversely affect not only the health, well-being, and quality of life of those living and working in the vicinity, but also the livelihood of nearby businesses such as wineries.

The Talent Irrigation District (TID), Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), the Department of Agriculture, and other agencies have been involved only minimally to this point in the process. The tentative staff decision is simply the first step to get a land use permit. Many other permits and regulations must be addressed. The TID submitted a letter of concern to the Jackson County Planning Department. This letter, along with the complete permit application

¹ https://www.nationalhogfarmer.com/mag/farming_states_regulate_odors

file and comments and concerns from neighbors, is available by putting in a public records request.

DEQ has a number of concerns still outstanding which relate mostly to possible contamination of surface and ground water. They also have issues with waste management and lack of an industrial septic system. DEQ involvement before now has been to try to mitigate erosion down the slope and into the TID canal. It has not been to address water contamination caused by animal waste. A barrier of straw bales was required by DEQ to help mitigate erosion some time back. As of 12/4/18, the straw bales still did not extend along the periphery between the hog lot and the TID canal, and those that were nearby were significantly decomposed. Fresh straw bales were transported in and placed since 12/4/18 after the media became involved. The straw bales were not intended to mitigate run-off water and threats to the surface and ground water caused by animal waste. These factors have not yet been addressed.

The Department of Agriculture and other agencies all have their own sets of requirements that must be met before a CAFO can be put into operation. The “decision to allow operation of a swine and poultry processing facility on property described..., is hereby approved, ***subject to the following conditions:***” as listed on pages 5-8 of the Notice of Tentative Staff Decision on Application for a Land Use Permit. Many requirements must still be adequately addressed and some may not even be possible to mitigate.

Concerned residents were instructed that the next step is to file an appeal within twelve days of the initial decision and to engage a specialized attorney. A GoFundMe site was created at https://www.gofundme.com/2xcw4-don039t-uproot-ashland?sharetype=teams&member=1236100&rcid=r01-154403509938-556a88886a1c45ed&pc=ot_co_campmgmt_w to cover the filing fee and attorney fees. That action is in process.

Prior to this, Ashland neighbors received negative information about this business from former neighbors in Bend. In an attempt to address the problem in Ashland, neighbors approached the owner to discuss the possibility of using their own resources to buy the land so the current owner could recoup her investment and relocate the operation to a more suitable location. The asking price was not reasonable at that time.

Respectfully,

Do Not Uproot Ashland!