

Senator John Thune Testimony
Environment and Public Works Committee Hearing to
Consider the Livestock Regulatory Protection Act
September 7, 2022

Thank you Chairman Carper and Ranking Member Capito for holding today's legislative hearing to consider the Livestock Regulatory Protection Act. I also want to thank South Dakota Farm Bureau Federation President and American Farm Bureau Federation Vice President Scott VanderWal for being here and for his testimony on this important legislation.

I have long been concerned with efforts to impose onerous regulations and costly permit fees on animal emissions and the negative effect this would have on U.S. agricultural producers' ability to continue providing a safe and abundant food supply for our nation and the world. Regulating animal emissions could ultimately lead to higher food costs for consumers who are already facing increased food prices.

Contrary to the story being pushed by opponents of the beef industry, beef production is directly responsible for only a tiny fraction of U.S. emissions. Cattle actually play an important role in managing pasturelands that sequester vast amounts of carbon.

And on top of that, it's become clear that with certain feed additives, as well as then capturing and utilizing the energy potential of their waste using biodigesters, it's possible to significantly reduce cattle emissions – making the demonization of beef even more wrongheaded. This issue isn't limited to cattle production. Regulating animal emissions would negatively affect the entire livestock sector, including poultry producers in Delaware and dairy producers in West Virginia.

To address this, I introduced the Livestock Regulatory Protection Act with Senator Sinema. The Livestock Regulatory Protection Act, which is also cosponsored by Senators Boozman and Kelly, would prevent the Environmental Protection Agency from imposing emissions regulations relating to the biological processes of livestock.

I actually introduced this bill years ago with the Democrat leader. This legislation was included in annual funding bills on a bipartisan basis for a number of years after the Democrat leader and I first introduced it. Unfortunately, Democrats have omitted this important protection in their recent spending proposals, and it has had to be secured in final spending bills.

Passing this legislation would provide livestock producers long-term certainty that their livelihoods will not be compromised by regulatory overreach. Thanks again for holding today's hearing, and I urge this committee to swiftly advance this important legislation.