



March 19, 2013

Supporting HB 2427: Banning canola from being grown in the Willamette Valley.

On behalf of the Albany Area Chamber of Commerce I am here today to lend our support to HB 2427, to ban canola from being grown in the Willamette Valley.

As you all know the Willamette Valley is one of the top vegetable seed producing regions in the world with sales of locally grown seeds bringing in over \$30 million each year. Those dollars go to family farmers, seed businesses and ultimately to the thousands of small businesses in the valley that support them with products and services. If you add in the impacts to organic growers, clover seed producers and fresh market vegetable producers you increase that financial impact to over \$100 million in sales in the Valley.

These family farms and their supporting businesses have depended on the Willamette Valley being an established and protected seed-district where canola has been limited for years. To think that the ODA would be willing to take away the unique vegetable seed industry we have in the valley and allow canola to be grown here has stunned our area farmers and local businesses, and puts our area farms and the seed crops we all depend on for food in grave danger.

We know that Canola is grown in other parts of Oregon for oil and biofuel and there is no objection of it staying where it's currently allowed. But to allow canola to enter the Willamette Valley and devastate a healthy and vibrant vegetable seed economy is unconscionable.

As ODA Director Katy Coba told a Senate Committee on February 14, "it's fair to say in other parts of the world, specialty seed industries have been destroyed by large amounts of canola. And that there is a level of canola where you do jeopardize specialty seeds but we just don't know what that acreage is." If this is the case, why is the ODA gambling with the future of the Willamette Valley and our food supply?

We need to save and protect the WV's world renowned vegetable and seed producing region. Please keep the Willamette Valley safe and support HB 2427.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Janet Steele".

Janet Steele
President