

Subject: HB 2427

As a farmer who was born and raised in the Willamette Valley I would like to respectfully urge you and your colleagues to bring HB 2427 to a vote, and to support the bill.

From everything I have come to understand, HB 2427 appears to be a common sense bill to restore protections to the Willamette Valley by barring canola production in the Valley. The Willamette Valley is one of only five remaining regions of the world suited to raising seeds for brassicas, including cabbage, broccoli, turnips, radish and cauliflower. Canola, also a brassica, readily cross-pollinates with other plants in the brassica family, destroying their genetic integrity. Customers of the specialty seed and clover seed industries have threatened to cancel seed contracts if canola planting is expanded in the Willamette Valley. Specialty seed is a \$34 million per year industry, while canola grossed just \$2.5 million last year. The small increase in canola production the Valley could accommodate is not worth risking the loss of our \$34 million specialty seed market.

The extreme vulnerability of our seed industry was graphically illustrated to me personally just last fall when I was forced to purchase annual rye grass seed that was imported from Denmark for one of our organic vineyard blocks here in Newberg because it was the only certified organic seed available on the market at the time. Talk about coals to Newcastle !

Further, virtually all canola is genetically engineered (GE) to be resistant to the active ingredient in RoundUp, the most commonly used herbicide. In addition to contaminating related brassica crop species, GE canola can and does cross-pollinate with wild mustards, a very common weed and pernicious weed in the Willamette Valley, creating a "Superweed" that is resistant to RoundUp. Canola pollen and seed also spread readily into the environment and once established are almost impossible to eradicate. Such GE contamination threatens organic production, which does not allow the use of genetic engineering and requires all inputs such as seeds be organic. Organic consumers expect that organic products will be GE-free, as its exclusion is one of the main reasons people buy organic.

If Oregon wants to continue to be known as a source of specialized seed and reap the economic and health benefits of organic production in the state, we must protect this important industry.

I sincerely hope you and your colleagues will help protect the unique bounty of this incredible valley we call home and support HR 2427 and bring the bill to a vote.

Thank you for your time and consideration !

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