

Willamette Valley Oilseed Producers Association
1055 S Pacific Highway West
Rickreall, OR 97371
(503) 302-0031

Testimony before the Joint Ways and Means Natural Resource Subcommittee
Respectfully submitted by Tomas Endicott,
On behalf of Willamette Valley Oilseed Producers Association (WVOPA)
May 16, 2013

RE: Opposition to HB 2427A

Co-Chairs Edwards and Unger and Members of the Subcommittee ::

My name is Tomas Endicott and I am Vice President of Willamette Biomass Processors, Inc. (WBP). WBP is largest oilseed processor in Oregon located in Rickreall. WBP processes conventional and organic oilseed crops, including soybeans, canola, camelina and flax. WBP is certified organic by Oregon Tilth and we have never purchased GMO crops of any kind. Our facility can crush up to 120 tons of oilseed per day. We have invested more than \$2.5 million in our facility, which has been in constant operation since 2008.

Also, I am a board member of the Willamette Valley Oilseed Producers Association (WVOPA), a non-profit industry association of more than 40 individuals and business involved in growing and processing oilseeds in the Willamette Valley and marketing the vegetable oil and oilseed meal throughout the Pacific Northwest region.

I have been a member of various Canola Advisory Committees organized through the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) since 2005.

The current ODA administrative rule governing canola production in the Willamette Valley represents more than a year of collaborative work by ODA staff, OSU staff and representatives of many diverse agricultural associations in the Willamette Valley. The ODA administrative rule, which became permanent in February of this year, is a reasonable and prudent pathway to coexistence between all Brassica seed crops. The administrative rule allows limited canola production in isolated areas on the edges of the Willamette Valley, it requires stringent crop management practices and it requires each grower to have a canola production contract with ODA.

The WVOPA Board does not believe that HB 2427 is a necessary piece of legislation. Whereas canola acreage is capped at 2500 acres per year according to the ODA administrative rule, this is an annual amount of canola that was grown in the Willamette Valley in the late 80's and early 90's with no negative effects. North Valley Farms in Banks has grown up to 300 acres of canola each of the last three years with no problems. Also, 2500 acres of canola is significantly less than the more than 10,000 acres of forage turnip and tillage radish—Brassica crops with identical characteristics to canola—that are currently grown in the Willamette Valley each year with no regulation. That said, if the Legislature chooses to fund a study of all Brassica crops in the Willamette Valley as outlined in HB 2427, ODA should

continue to regulate canola production according to its administrative rule throughout the course of the study.

Coexistence of all Brassica crops is the goal.

Since the commencement of the current administrative rule process that began almost two years ago, coexistence for all Brassica crops in the Willamette Valley has been the goal for ODA and for growers who need the canola rotation. Already canola is banned in 85% of the area of the Willamette Valley where crop production is possible, according to the ODA administrative rule. Canola production is only allowed on the east, west and northern edges of the Willamette Valley—especially areas where growers do not have irrigation and cannot obtain irrigation.

Canola is not extraordinary. All Brassica crops have the same effects. All Brassica crops need to be regulated equally.

All Brassica crops—canola, cabbage, kale, turnip, radish, rutabaga and others— have the ability to interact with one another regarding cross-pollination, pests and diseases. Growers prevent unwanted interactions between crops in the same family by using adequate isolation, by controlling volunteers and by testing to guarantee seed purity. This is what grass seed growers do, as required by OSU Seed Certification rules. This is what vegetable seed producers do as required by Willamette Valley Specialty Seed Association (WVSSA) rules. This is what canola growers must do according to the stringent production guidelines laid out in the ODA administrative rule governing canola production in the Willamette Valley.

Study will provide more information, but is not necessary

The WVOPA board does not believe that another Brassica study is needed; however, we do believe that more information is useful in understanding the interactions between crops in the same family if the Legislature deems that obtaining such knowledge is an appropriate use of funds. If a study moves forward, that study should focus on the cross-pollination, disease and pests effects of all Brassica crops in the Willamette Valley—canola, tillage radish, forage turnip and all Brassica vegetable seeds—given the management practices prescribed by WVSSA rules and the ODA administrative rule governing canola production in the Willamette Valley.

ODA is the appropriate agency to manage coexistence of all Brassica crops

ODA has the experience and expertise to regulate canola production in the Willamette Valley equitably and responsibly. WVOPA does not believe that the Legislature should be involved in the detailed regulation of any commodity crop. The Legislature should provide guidance to the agency, then allow ODA to manage the situation appropriately. This is precisely what has been done in the case of canola production in the Willamette Valley and we support the ODA administrative rule as the solution to establishing coexistence between all Brassica crops in the Willamette Valley.

No subsidy on canola seed that goes to human food-grade markets

Canola seed can receive a \$0.05 per pound Oregon tax credit if the oil extracted from the seed is processed into biofuel in Oregon. However, the subsidy buys down the price of the vegetable oil to the biofuel producer. The tax credit does not affect the price of the canola seed to the grower. With or without the Oregon tax credit, growers receive commodity market price for their canola. Today canola is more valuable as human food than as biofuel. As a result, growers sell their canola seed to food-grade crush facilities and do not utilize the biofuel tax credit.

