

Raszka Shelley

From: William Gray <joyabill@frontiernet.net>
Sent: Thursday, March 07, 2013 9:38 AM
To: Rancier Racquel; Sen Roblan; Sen Baertschiger; Sen Burdick; Sen Close; Sen Prozanski
Subject: Opposed to SB 633

To Whomever It May Concern:

I am writing to express my opposition to Senate Bill 633, which proposes to place all control of agricultural seed in the hands of the state. Frankly, in my nearly 60 years on this planet, my experiences have led me to a great distrust of large, distant bodies, whether they be government or corporate. The bigger and more distant from me and my home and concerns, the worse and more potentially dangerous they are. And the main reason for this distrust is that such bodies often just don't have the same interests as mine or my neighbors'.

I have no problem with MINIMUM standards set by government for the benefit of citizens' health, safety and welfare. But the more local jurisdictions should always be able to adopt more stringent standards, if they can muster the votes. A great example is the auto emission standards set by California, which surpass those of the federal government, which are MINIMUM standards. California has been leading the way toward cleaner air for decades. That is entirely appropriate. Had the federal government passed a law that stated that ONLY it could pass air quality laws, we as a nation would be far worse off than we are now.

I perceive a similar situation regarding genetically modified agricultural crops, the dangers and risks of which are still poorly understood but apparently real and varied. But threats to the public health may exist as well due to various toxic pesticides applied to seeds, to protect them from rodents, birds, insects, fungi, etc. If a county should develop the political will to regulate such threats before the state does, it should have every right to do so. (I do not object to the state enacting a state-wide ban on GMOs, however, as this would fall under the heading of minimum standards to protect public health and safety and the environment.)

Additionally, each county has its own unique climate and soil conditions that determine exactly which varieties will perform best there. In many localities and counties, seeds are saved, swapped, packaged, sold and germinated to suit the needs of the community, and the local climatic and soil conditions. It does not make sense for the state to prevent or limit this.

This poorly thought-out bill smells to me like the brainchild of a politician in the pay of one or more huge agri-business conglomerates, trying to increase its profits at the expense of local communities.

I urge you to oppose SB 633. It represents bad State policy. Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Please place my testimony in the record for the public hearing.

Sincerely,

William Gray
PO Box 1020
Cave Junction, OR 97523