



1536 SE 11th Ave., Ste. A | Portland, OR 97214

www.ospirg.org (503) 231-4181 (ph)
info@ospirg.org (503) 231-4007 (fx)

March 12, 2013

To: Senator Arnie Roblan, Chair
Senate Committee on Rural Communities and Economic Development

Re: OSPIRG opposes Senate Bill 633

The Oregon State Public Interest Research Group (OSPIRG) is a citizen funded non-partisan non-profit, working on behalf of the public interest to protect consumers and promote good government.

OSPIRG is opposed to Senate Bill 633 because it has serious consequences, not the least of which is that it stifles legitimate democratic decision making at the local level.

In general, lawmakers should treat local governance with the utmost respect. There should be an extraordinary and unequivocally substantiated public interest rationale before any effort be made to prevent citizens from making local decisions and enacting laws about what is best for their communities. The bill's claim that "agricultural seed, flower seed and vegetable seed and seed product industries will be adversely affected if those industries are subject to a patchwork of local regulations" is unsubstantiated and not a sufficient justification to strip citizens and local governments of their ability to make local decisions.

This principle alone should be a sufficient case against SB 633. It should be noted, however, that this is not merely an academic matter. For example, one negative consequence of SB 633 could be that it effectively prevents local communities in Oregon from protecting consumers and farmers from the negative effects of genetically engineered crops and resulting products. This is an issue of high public interest. Efforts from communities to adopt safety testing standards, consumer right-to-know labeling rules, or clarity on liability would be effectively squashed by this bill should it become law.

Thank you for considering our position.