

March 1, 2013

To: Committee on Rural Communities and Economic Development

Shelley Raszka, Committee Assistant

Re: Hearing on Senate Bill 633

Dear Members of the Committee,

We urge you to not pass Senate Bill 633 out of committee. SB 633 would strip counties in Oregon of their abilities to craft appropriate county-wide seed policies. SB 633 would give exclusive regulatory power over seeds, and products of agricultural seed, to the state, preempting local authority. In this way, we believe SB 633 ignores local issues of economic viability which are best handled by local control. Contrary to the idea that a “patchwork” of local regulations will stifle growth, it is precisely the process of making decisions at the local level that best serves the unique agricultural conditions of our various counties.

Several county policies could be affected by SB 633. For example, citizens in Jackson County have successfully achieved getting a ban on growing genetically engineered crops on the May 2014 ballot. Citizens in four other Oregon counties are also hard at work on similar county bans. Several counties and cities in California, Hawaii, Washington, and Maine have already adopted policies to ban the growing of GE crops in their counties. Oregon counties should be allowed the same level of local control as these other states. But if SB 633 passes, the state will take that power from our county.

Regardless of your opinion on genetically engineered crops, SB 633 goes too far. Seed and agricultural issues are unique to each climate, culture, and business community, and control over such matters should remain in the hands of each county to determine their economic and agricultural future.

I wish these comments to be submitted as testimony for public hearing.

Chris Schreiner, Executive Director, Oregon Tilth Certified Organic

Suzy and Robelee Evans, Owners, Foundhorn Gardens

Lynn Coody, Principal, Organic Agsystems Consulting