

I am Joel Ockunzzi and I urge you to pass SB633.

I would first like to thank Chairman Roblan and the committee members for this opportunity to be heard.

I first located in Jackson County in 1980 and have been in the private business sector my entire career and am a licensed Realtor specializing in rural lands, farm, & ranch.

I am in my second appointed term as a Jackson County Planning Commissioner and I take great care to make reasoned decisions based upon the best presented facts and evidence.

I have also recently been appointed to the Technical Advisory Committee for the Governors executive order EO -1207 Pilot Plan.

I am a member of the Jackson County Medford Chamber of Commerce Natural Resource Committee.

I am a member and on the business recruitment committee of SOREDI, Southern Oregon Regional Development, Inc.

Lastly, I am a member of the Oregon Farm Bureau and the Jackson County Stockman chapter of the Oregon Cattleman's Association.

In addition, I raise a small select herd of grass fed purebred Angus beef and have a beginning business development in the production of worm castings for natural soil amendment products and fishing bait.

I am a strong advocate for more local control in land use matters because Jackson County has a different set and subset of soils profiles, terrain features, forested lands, and public to private land ratios than many counties particularly to the north.

In Jackson county we have mandated for our ordinances to not be more restrictive than any state imposed land use requirement.

In fact we even contracted an outside consultant to review our LDO and advise us as to make sure we

have no conflicts on the LDO to accommodate that mandate.

However, the proposed ballot measure 15-119 would require the implementation of a new ordinance which would violate this mandate.

It would require the implementation of a new 11 page ordinance Chapter 635, drafted and proposed by the measure proponents which was not presented by staff and the planning commission has not reviewed for recommendation to the Board of Commissioners.

Additionally, State, Federal, & International approvals would be artificially denied to many Jackson County traditional farmers.

It would deny right to farm laws that should not be impinged upon that protects ALL farm operators including those voicing opposition to GE cultivation.

It would impede benefits on three axis; competitive cultivation practices with economies of scale,

improved crop resistance to insects, and enhanced production capabilities per acre planted.

There is no consensus science that GE is detrimental and it is positional in a science practiced for generations that has provided for feeding millions throughout the centuries across the globe. It would be unfortunate to see the complexity of the particulars translate into obscurity of the facts with the result being increased bureaucracy impeding legitimate agricultural practices.

The solution is always in the details and not in the fears.

I urge the committee to pass SB633.

There is nothing more pure or respectable than the attempt to earn a profit from toiling in the fields.

If you happened to catch the ad in the recent Super Bowl "So God made a Farmer" no one could describe it better or in more endearing terms than the late Paul Harvey did in his narrative.

Dawn till dusk, seven days a week, rain, or no rain,  
wind, weather, and storm, good markets and bad,  
Oregon farmers and ranchers brave the fates and  
help feed the world.

For that reason alone you should pass SB633.

Through the course of time innovative technologies  
born of need and fueled by the desire to improve  
results in all categories have lead to abundance.

Those who accept the challenge to run the risks  
should be free to find their respective market niche  
utilizing their own expertise whether it be in  
advanced scientific applications, natural, or organic  
production models.

There is a need and place for all and it is a mutually  
inclusive need.

I hope you pass SB633.

Those who earn their living off the land have always  
been and should remain courteous and conscientious  
producers.

Good neighbors have been their watch words.

So it should remain among all farmers and cultivation methods.

It can remain through coordination of cultivation practices, among reasonable practitioners, where common cause and mutual respect lead the way in an ever more complex and expanding dynamic.

That is good reason to pass SB633.

That is why in this specific case it cannot be allowed or practical for a city, county, locale which do not have the financial resources, or the scientific expertise, to impose upon its citizenry the regulatory oversight that would also be sporadic and arbitrary and come with costly compliance processes in banning a legal farming practice.

The unintended consequences will far outweigh the benefit.

You should pass SB633 for that reason.

Instead, what can and will work, and bring an economy of scale that provides increased returns, will be achieved by improving channels of communication and considerate cultivations among farmers of all stripes.

This is a far better approach than a divisive county ballot measure to outcast a body of honest hard working legal producers.

I urge that you pass SB633 and we rapidly move forward to allow all proven practices to complement each other.

As a person who deals in farm and ranch real estate, land use planning issues, who raises natural grass fed beef, has a business interest in worm castings natural fertilizers, and recognizes the benefits of Hybrid Vigor through common & advanced scientific methods,

I urge you to pass SB633.

*So most importantly*, we should uphold the rights and freedoms for all farmers & ranchers who operate their agricultural enterprise responsibly and all of whom should be allowed to raise the seed, crops, or livestock, of their choice in the most thoughtful and economically viable manner.

I finally again urge the committee to pass SB633.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration in a matter that is critically important for furthering a vibrant Jackson County farming community.

Joel R. Ockunzzi