



**OREGON STATE SENATE**

3/12/13

Chair Roblan, Vice-Chair Baertschiger and members of the committee, for the record my name is Bill Hansell, I am a State Senator representing district 29 which includes Wallowa, Union, Umatilla, Morrow, Gilliam, Sherman, and parts of Wasco Counties. I am here today regarding the bill before you, SB 633.

Previous to my service here in Salem as a State Senator, I had the distinct honor of being a Umatilla County Commissioner for 30 years. In addition to this role, I also had the unique opportunity to serve as the President of the Oregon Association of Counties and President of the National Association of Counties. Having served in these capacities, I am not an individual many would expect to be a chief sponsor of a bill such as this. Though I am an ardent supporter of local government, I believe strongly this bill is important and necessary to ensure decisions relating to GMO's are made at the state and federal levels where there is both the workforce personnel and the science to substantiate future regulations.

As a County Commissioner, the biggest challenge I faced was the county budget. How do we fund the basic mandated services with the resources provided? Without question, I believe this is the single biggest and most important challenge County Commissioners face. So when I foresee a situation which has the potential to all but bankrupt a county I am compelled to act. Hence SB 633.

Our system of government has three levels - local, state and federal for a reason. One of the reasons is to match the level of regulation with the level of significance. The courts have already opined that issues of statewide significance should be regulated at the state level. This is the basic premise of SB 633. The regulation of GMOs should be at the state and federal levels where the expertise and resources reside.

To illustrate, I hold in my hand an actual sample of the documentation the federal government requires of a company such as Monsanto to complete in order for a GMO to be considered for federal safety standards and regulations. I do not believe any county ordinance, regardless how it came to be, will ever trump federal rules, regulations and oversight, nor do I believe they possess the human resources to go through such cumbersome paperwork/regulations.

HB 633 places this regulation at the state level, preempting local governments. This will have the potential of saving county taxpayers tens of thousands of dollars in litigation expenses defending county-made laws they cannot win. Local ordinances have serious potential to put our counties in a precarious situation where such litigation will come forth whether they enforce such laws or not.

House the regulations where it belongs at the state level, not 36 different counties. Please move forward SB 633.

Thank you and I will be happy to answer any questions.