



**Testimony before the House Agriculture & Natural Resource Committee
Respectfully Submitted by Jana Jarvis on behalf of
The Willamette Valley Oilseed Producers Association
April 7, 2015**

Chair Witt and Members of the Committee:

RE: HB 3382

The Willamette Valley Oilseed Producers Association (WVOPA) comes before you today requesting your support for HB 3382. This legislation is designed to complement a bill from the 2013 legislative session that funded a \$679,000 three year study on the effect of canola production for seed within the Willamette Valley and determining if canola should be regulated differently than other Brassicacea species. This study is underway and you have heard results of these findings to date.

Interest in canola production in Oregon generally, and in the Willamette Valley specifically, has existed for a number of years. It is a dry land crop that provides significant benefit as a rotation crop for wheat and other grasses by helping to break the pest and disease cycles, reducing the need for herbicides and fungicides. As no-till farming practices continue to evolve, the ability to grow a rotation crop with the net value and established markets that canola presents provides an attractive option for many growers.

Canola is a member of the brassica family and has identical genetic characteristics to other allowed crops, including turnips and radishes. There is no scientific evidence to support the claim that canola provides unique cross-pollination challenges from others brassicacea crops which are grown unrestricted in this region. Appropriate farming practices currently utilized for the variety of other brassicacea crops grown apply to canola as well, including isolation distances and transportation practices. Complimenting this approach would include access to the electronic pinning system funded by the Legislature and currently managed by the Willamette Valley Specialty Seed Association as a measure to reduce potential conflicts between growers.

Canola's reputation has suffered from a variety of misinformation campaigns designed to prejudice its viability as a desirable crop in Oregon. While it has been identified as a

source for biofuel production, its value as a food source for both humans and animals has priced it out of this market. The tiny brownish-black seeds similar to poppy seeds contain as much as 44% oil content and the meal produced as a result of crushing these seeds provides a high protein food source for animal feed. This is especially true as a food source for dairy cattle where canola meal can increase production in a milk cow by one liter per day. For humans, canola oil has been identified as a heart healthy oil and is growing in demand for those looking to decrease trans fats in their diet. While there are varieties of GE canola available, growers in the Willamette Valley have chosen to grow conventional or hybrid varieties due to their increased yields. This resultant growing demand for canola is the basis for HB 3382.

The legislation passed in 2013 established a study at OSU for the first three years of a six-year moratorium on growing canola in the Willamette Valley protected district. In January 2019, this moratorium will be lifted without further legislative action or rulemaking on the part of ODA. Currently ODA's authority to create control areas is limited to protecting the agricultural industry from diseases, insects, animals, plants or noxious weeds. Their authority for creating these control areas is not extended to protecting agriculture from market-based threats or concerns. HB 3382 simply extends their ability to allow up to 500 acres of production during the final three years of this moratorium. They would still oversee the selection of fields for canola production and growers would continue to work closely with OSU as they finalize the results of their study.

WVOPA was not included in any negotiation or discussion in what was ultimately the final package in 2013, but are seeking a solution to the result of this market being opened locally with the acreage currently in production. The specialty seed industry has not been negatively impacted by this limited production, and our growers simply ask that you allow this limited production to continue during the final three years of this moratorium as a testament to the ability for voluntary co-existence among growers. The local processing facility crushing these canola seeds for oil and meal is interested in expanding their employment opportunities as they grow this market, and many growers are asking for the opportunity to invest in growing canola as well. Please support HB 3382 and allow this limited production.