

To Senate Environment Committee Chair Chris Edwards:

Why is the Oregon legislature protecting Monsanto and the agribusiness interests behind GMOs? The crops grown by Monsanto, Syngenta, and others are for fuel and animal feed - corn, soy, sugar beet, not food. **Why is Oregon not supporting our local farmers, the ones who feed us? Gmo sugar beets will contaminate our table beets and chard, making our local farmers unable to grow their own seeds without danger of being sued and put out of business, or fight and spend untold dollars to protect themselves while taking up valuable time of ODA staff.**

Not only does this bill ignore the billions in economic damage that GMOs have already caused to non-GMO farmers, not just here in the Valley but around the world (just one example is described here <http://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2014/09/26/351785294/gmo-wheat-investigation-closed-but-another-one-opens>), the Senators need to realize there are at least 4 big problems with HB 2509:

1. **Forced mediation.** HB 2509 would effectively **force local family farmers whose crops were contaminated by GMOs into a vague “mediation process”** before a farmer could go to court to sue to try to stop GMO contamination. Farmers already use mediation when it make sense, but they should not be forced into a biased “mediation” process.
2. **Liability for farmers contaminated by GMOs.** If a farmer refused to mediate, HB 2509 says they could be liable for hundreds of thousands of dollars in a GMO-grower’s attorney’s fees in a related court case. **AND if Monsanto joined the case, the farmer could be liable for THEIR attorney fees.**
3. **Pro-GMO mediators.** HB 2509’s mediation process would be orchestrated by the State agency that has done more to defend GMOs than any other: the Oregon Dept. of Agriculture (ODA). ODA could then create a costly and time consuming mediation process that would make it harder for farmers to protect themselves against GMO contamination.
4. **Funding for OSU propaganda.** The bill would also direct propaganda funding to OSU for “educational materials and information regarding the coexistent use of agricultural lands.” The bill would put OSU, which has a long history of promoting GMOs, in the position of using Monsanto’s talking points that GMOs can “co-exist” with organic and other non-GMO crops despite the dramatic contamination events and billions in damage that GMOs continue to cause to non-GMO crops.

Thank you for supporting YOUR voters *and* your food supply.

*Kristina Lefever
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