

# Mindful Earth Farm

May 20, 2015

Senator Chris Edwards  
900 Court St. NE, S-411  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: Opposition to HB 2509

Dear Chair Edwards and Senate Committee Members,

I am a small farmer in Jackson County, Oregon and I am writing on my own behalf to urge you to reject HB 2509. While I also serve as the President of the Southern Oregon Seed Growers Association, we have not yet formally opposed HB 2509 since we only learned of it yesterday.

Farmers that have been impacted by genetically engineered contamination should not be forced into an Oregon Department of Agriculture mediation program. I'm not opposed to mediation generally, but myself and other farmers should not be forced into it with the threat of having to pay another party's attorney fees. Any possible litigation over GMO contamination would certainly involve the companies that hold the patents on GMOs, such as Syngenta or Monsanto intervening and the potential that I would have to have to pay their attorney fees if I don't go into ODA mediation is very disturbing.

In 2013 when Syngenta started growing GMO sugar beets near my farm, I was forced to tear up the beet and chard seed crops I was growing as did many other farmers. The GMO sugar beets were well within the known cross-pollination distances and there is no practical way I could afford to invest the resources to grow out my crop for the next two years only to then confirm through testing my crop was contaminated with GMOs.

When I called the ODA to see what they could do to help, I received no help whatsoever. Myself and other seed growers have for years now been unable to grow beet and chard seeds because of the GMO contamination risks. The idea that HB 2509 would give funding to OSU to do "education" on co-existence is asking a state funded university to preach a concept that is popular with those that support GMOs but which has no basis in the reality of farming today.

Again, I hope you will oppose HB 2509.

Sincerely,

Chris Hardy