Dear Chair Edwards and Committee Members,

We own Kittleson Family Farm in Josephine County and are writing to encourage you to oppose HB 2509. We are a small organic family farm that provides members of our community with weekly food boxes, as well as offers school-age children an introduction to local organic agriculture. We practice seed saving and follow all organic farming principles so contamination by GMOs are a real threat to our livelyhood.

We oppose HB 2509 as forced mediation only serves to protect the financial interests of GMO Growers by threatening to make us liable for another party's attorney fees. Continuing to make it difficult with more new hurdles for small farmers is the goal of corporate agriculture and does not serve to protect the multitude of Oregon farmers who are not part of that conglomerate. Farmers such as ourselves understand the existing legal challenges. We can not continue to burden local farmers with this corporate agenda.

In Josephine and neighboring Jackson county, our communities have already voted to keep our local agriculture GMO free and this bill sets to undermine the local people's will.

We believe that the Oregon Dept. of Agriculture has proven their Pro-GMO stance. Having this entity be responsible for the mediation process does not allow for an unbiased review. At minimum, they should not be involved in a mediation process.

Finally, we oppose HB 2509 because "co-existence" is not a practical or philosophical reality for non-GMO farmers. There is only dominence when it comes to GM farming. If the committee memebers understood the reality of our unique farming landscapes in Oregon and how GM contamination occurs with or without our permission, giving OSU money to promote the concept of "co-existence" would be seen for the propoganda machine that GMO's are. Funding our state's universities to promote a one-sided truth is nothing short of special interests. Please uphold the will of the people, not the GMO agricultural agenda.

Sincerely,

Dan and Janell Kittleson