



Please support the – A5 amendments to HB 2509

HB 2509 is the product of a workgroup led by Representative Brian Clem which looked at agricultural coexistence issues. The workgroup consisted of a broad range of stakeholders, and HB 2509 was the consensus agreement.

HB 2509 would utilize the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) mediation program to help neighboring farmers identify voluntary ways to deal with coexistence issues. Farmers of all types—conventional, GMO, and organic—have managed coexistence for 100+ years. Unlike some other proposals, this bill promotes coexistence by allowing individual farmers to work out issues collaboratively with their neighbors. HB 2509 provides a mechanism to help farmers find common ground with the help of a third-party mediator and avoid future conflict.

HB 2509 would:

- **Create incentives for farmers to address potential conflicts without government intervention.**
- **Utilize a mediator as a third party to help identify common ground between neighbor farmers.**
- **Require mediation for coexistence issues that could result in a lawsuit.**
- **Allow for flexibility in how individual coexistence conflicts are mediated.**

The – A5 amendments make changes to address concerns raised in the Senate hearing. The changes include:

- Expand options for mediation to include USDA Certified Agricultural Mediation in addition to the ODA program.
- Cap costs for ODA mediation program at \$2500 to ensure affordability to all growers.
- Remove language requiring OSU to make available information on federal coexistence strategies.

Importantly, this program will help us to identify where conflicts exist so we can better determine what additional policies may be warranted in the future.

For information, contact Jenny Dresler with Oregon Farm Bureau or Scott Dahlman with Oregonians for Food and Shelter.