

Good afternoon chair Fager and members of the committee,

My name is Bret Diamond and I'm here today <sup>in</sup> ~~to encourage you to~~ support <sup>of</sup> HB 4122 for several important reasons.

I am a beekeeper in Lane County and a Anthropologist who works with farmers all over the world. As some of you may have <sup>known</sup> heard, Glory Bee Honey from Eugene recently acquired organic and non-GMO verified certification for their honey products—the very first company in the world to achieve this milestone. And it was not an easy endeavor—it took them FIVE YEARS to make it happen. We couldn't be prouder of Glory Bee, they are a wonderful company with an excellent reputation of producing high-quality products and giving back to our community. But as happy as we are to hear of their success in becoming non-GMO verified, there is a certain level of sadness that comes with the announcement. The sad truth is that not a single drop of Glory Bee's organic or non-GMO verified honey comes from Lane County. Not a single drop of their non-GMO verified honey comes from within the state of Oregon—or even the Pacific Northwest. Sadly, not a single drop of their non-GMO honey comes from the United States. Why? Because in order to attain non-GMO verified status, the hives must be placed at the center of a 10 square mile buffer zone that is documented to be GMO-free. Bees routinely travel 4-6 miles when they forage for pollen and nectar, but some do go even farther, and to ensure non-GMO status, the 10 square mile fly zone is required. Sadly, there is no non-GMO verified honey currently produced in the U.S. because there simply are no 10 square mile bee fly zones in the U.S. that have a sufficient food source for bees, but no GMO crops. While Lane County could <sup>create</sup> ~~provide these~~ non-GMO bee fly zones, we are currently forbidden from doing so under SB 863.

Organic agriculture is growing at a tremendous rate. According to the USDA, in 2014 there were 14,093 organic farms in the US producing \$5.5 Billion in organic products. While Oregon ranked 9<sup>th</sup> in the number of organic farms, we ranked 4<sup>th</sup> in sales of organic crops producing \$237 million dollars of organic products. ~~California was ranked number one, and while we may never top California's organic production due to their abundant land base and topography, Washington state ranked number two in organic sales—more~~ <sup>\$530 million</sup> ~~than doubling Oregon's sales—even though our arable land base is nearly identical. The market potential for Oregon's organic farmers is HUGE—if we act now to protect them. If we are allowed to take action to protect them.~~

~~There is a seismic shift in the global food economy with more and more countries are abandoning GMO agriculture in order to protect their seed heritage, their farmworkers, their pollinators, and their citizens from the hazards and harms of corporate GMO agriculture. This past October, 2/3's of~~

at \$530 million

Europe banned the cultivation of all GMO crops and there are now 38 countries that have banned GMO cultivation entirely and only 26 that are currently growing GMO crops.

In the 1980's when GMOs were first making their way towards the marketplace, agronomists and agricultural experts warned that avoiding GMO cross-contamination was going to prove to be very difficult as it is nearly impossible to control pollen in the wind. They urged lawmakers to set aside areas that could be classified as GMO-free seed sanctuaries to protect non-GMO and organic farmers. The USDA organic program was codified into law in 1994, while the first GMO crop was not approved for cultivation until 1996.

In 2000, Starlink GMO corn cross-contamination cost over \$1 Billion dollars in legal settlements, and in 2006 GMO Liberty rice cross-contamination cost farmers and agribusiness another Billion+ dollars in settlements. Neither Starlink corn nor Liberty rice were ever approved for human consumption. In 2014, illegal GMO wheat was discovered growing in E. Oregon, a GMO crop that was had been in test trials 10 years previous, but had never been approved for sale or distribution. News of the wheat contamination cost U.S. wheat farmers hundreds of millions of dollars in canceled wheat sales from Asian buyers—our largest export market—who want nothing to do with GMO's, and 2/3's of Europe just banned GMO crop cultivation this past October

GMO cross-contamination isn't a hypothetical—it is a real and present danger to Oregon's farmers and to our global reputation as a state that produces high-quality organic and non-GMO crops that are free from GMO cross-contamination. A new study published just two weeks ago concluded that GMO alfalfa has now spread to the wild here in Oregon, as has GMO Bentgrass from test plots outside Bend that is now out of control and costing millions of dollars per year to try and eradicate.

SB 863 took away our county's and our city's rights to self-determination for our food systems. I can't think of anything more undemocratic than preempting our own citizens at the behest of out-of-state chemical companies, who's primary concern is their profits—not the health and well-being of our people and our environment. Under SB 863, counties, cities, and municipalities are forbidden from working with local farmers and community members to draft laws or policies that would protect non-GMO or organic farmers and beekeepers from GMO cross contamination whether it be countywide bans like Jackson County or even <sup>creating</sup> small, GMO-free zones to protect beekeepers and local organic farmers. I urge you to vote YES on HB 4122, and restore our community's rights. Let the people of Oregon work together to create a local polices that best serve their communities instead of a top-down, big-government approach that favors corporate rights over the rights of own people. Please, vote YES on 4122!