

Dear Esteemed Members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources,

I am writing today on behalf of Ashland Food Co-op, a 45 year old consumer owned retail grocery cooperative based in Ashland, Oregon.

Ashland Food Co-op supports House Bill 2469 because we believe that our **local communities deserve the right to protect our family farmers growing traditional crops from contamination and other impacts of genetically engineered crops**. We believe these crops can have significant effect on our local farming community.

Family farmers deserve protection from genetically engineered crops.

Genetically engineered crops differ from traditional crops because they are legally patented and typically owned by large corporate seed companies with the ability to sue farmers. Contamination of local and organic crops could have a disastrous impact on our ability to buy and sell Certified Organic food.

Pollen is known to spread for miles from the fields. If pollen from a genetically engineered crop cross-pollinates a traditional crop even miles away then the seeds that result will contain genetically engineered genes. A farmer who learns that even a small percent of their seed crop has been cross-pollinated cannot legally sell their seed crop or use it to replant their next crop. They also risk being sued for patent infringement.

HB 2469 allows local regulations without prescribing a 'one size fits all' solution

Pre-empting local communities from adopting local laws based on local growing conditions does not make sense. In the continued absence of state action, local rules are the only way to provide meaningful protections for farmers threatened with contamination from genetically engineered crops. Local governments and local farmers deserve the right to shape locally appropriate protections. As has been shown in Jackson County, such local farmer protections are consistent with Oregon's 'right to farm' law.

Please vote YES on HB 2469. Our family farmers deserve protection from Genetically Engineered Crops.

Sincerely,

Annie Hoy
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