



KIRSCH

Family Farms, Inc.

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March 15, 2017

Re: House Bill 2469

House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources

Chairman Clem, Vice-Chairman's McLain and Sprenger, and Committee:

My name is Brenda Frketich and I'm the owner of Kirsch Family Farms, in St. Paul, Oregon. I am the third generation on my family's sustainable farm, where we grow wheat, vegetables, vegetables seeds, hazelnuts, grass seed, and clover. I farm alongside my husband and our two sons.

I'm writing today in great opposition to House Bill 2469. This bill would greatly hurt what was a big win for agriculture in 2013, the passing of SB 633, seed preemption. In 2013 when I testified at that hearing I said, *"This bill (seed preemption) if passed would allow me as a young farmer the security of knowing that the regulation of crops would be only at the state and federal level; an assurance that would go a long ways in securing the future of our farms here in Oregon."* And it has done just that. Knowing that county by county regulations are all the same, knowing that no one can come in and make growing decisions for our farm, at the county level. These are a big relief from a management and longevity standpoint for me as a farmer in Oregon. It has allowed us to continue to work with our neighbors to coexist, as we have been doing for generations. We have had to fight time and time again for this bill, even after it passed, but I'm here today to ask you to vote no on this year's fight, HB 2469. The seed preemption bill needs to have language that keeps the regulation of seeds grown, even GE or GMO seeds, at the state and federal level only.

If we begin to have local government setting regulations this would very quickly create a nightmare for me as a producer. Not only do some of our farms reach through more than one county, but we also farm in different towns. Can you imagine being regulated on what you can grow in one county or town and not the same in another? It would be a logistical disaster and not just for me as a farmer, but also for manufacturers, and distributors as well! Beyond that our over 400 local city governments and 36 counties would feel the financial stress of taking care of these incredibly large, complex, and scientific issues that would come before them. I know that no counties are overflowing with funds to create an entirely new mechanism to regulate something down to how far the pollen flies.

Federally we already have in place the USDA, EPA, and FDA to regulate for example genetically engineered crops. While on the state side we have the ODA to do their due diligence in working with state specific situations. These are funded departments that have the expertise, financial backing and

research to take on these large-issues! They have the ability to use science and not emotion, and create a system that is best for all crops here in Oregon, including GE and GMO crops.

We don't grow any GE or GMO crops on our farm. But that is not to say that we won't in the future. The times are changing and pests, disease, climates, are never stagnant. Because of that I truly believe that we need to have tools at the ready to be able to respond to these changes. Farmers have been adapting to challenges for generations here in Oregon, and that won't change, what will change is our ability to navigate these challenges if tools are constantly taken away from us. The future is always uncertain, but having small assurances, such as not having county by county regulation of the seeds that I grow, really go a long way for how bright the future can be here.

After three generations my family is here to stay, obviously we can't move the land or soil that we have worked for decades, and because of that I'm ready to take on the challenge of allowing us to continue growing crops. I also see bills like 633 as a positive move toward a little more security for my family's farm and our future here in Oregon, and bills like HB 2469 only as a way to gut those very protections. Seed preemption was passed for good reason, to protect farmers and what they grow, and it needs to continue to stay in place with the GE and GMO language. State and federal level regulation is more than enough, coexistence can and does happen successfully. Truly there is no need to bring more government into the conversation of regulation.

Voting no today is saying that you support all farmers in Oregon, not just the select few who chose to not coexist. So please vote no on HB 2469 and don't cut the legs out from under any of our federal and state regulators and pass the buck to counties and cities who are unprepared for these issues.

Thank you for your time on this very important issue for farmers.

Sincerely,



Brenda Frketich

Kirsch Family Farms, Inc.

St. Paul, Oregon

Blog: www.nuttygrass.com