

March 15, 2017

TO: Committee Administrator, House Committee on the Judiciary

FROM: Terry Anderson  
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RE: Statement in support of HB 2739 for distribution to Committee members

As a small farm owner in Jackson County I want to urge the Committee to pass HB 2739 on to further consideration by the full House.

Despite calls for “coexistence” between growers of genetically engineered and non-GE crops, the “coexistence” approach really only allows for the continued existence of one side in this conflict. Gene transfer by cross-pollination is effectively impossible to prevent and irreversible, and the economic effect on farmers who serve markets which will not accept GE contamination threatens their continued existence.

Commodities like wheat and alfalfa are particularly important in Oregon, as are specialty seed crops, and important segments of these markets require GE-free product. In addition there is a significant threat from the spread of invasive weed species with GE pesticide resistance.

HB 2739 would require the main beneficiaries of GE plant technology—the seed and pesticide corporations which hold the patents on the technology and receive premium prices for their products—to pay a share of the damages imposed on non-GE farms when their genetics are not properly contained. Otherwise all risks and damages are borne by non-GE farmers.