



Treat yourself to better health™

March 15, 2016

Re: Testimony for Support of HB 2469

To Whom it May Concern,

We are writing this letter to express support for **HB 2469** for the hearing on March 16, 2017 in front of the House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Herb Pharm is a leading organic grower and producer of medicinal herbs, based in the town of Williams in Josephine County, OR. We employ approximately 100 individuals. Our company was established in 1979 and we have risen to the #1 brand of liquid herb extracts sold in natural food stores across the United States.

Herb Pharm built its reputation on the quality and purity of the herbal products we produce. The purity of our herbs we achieve through our "seed to shelf" vertical integration is a key competitive differentiator in the marketplace. Organic, and by extension, non-GMO status is the foundation of our purity claims.

The establishment of GE-free seed sanctuaries and protection from GE-farming activity is of critical importance. It has enabled our business to continue to thrive, and can serve as a boon for related Oregon businesses.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Michael Gillette
Director of Marketing
On behalf of Herb Pharm, LLC

March 15, 2017

Dear House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources,

We are writing in Support for HB2469

ISSUE: GMO Crop Ban in Josephine County

Pacific Botanicals is a 150-acre farm located in Josephine County. We have been in business since 1979 as a supplier of certified organic medicinal herbs. Despite what BIG BUSINESS may say about GMO Crops, Pacific Botanicals would literally be shut down if GMO were found in its crops due to “drift” from a nearby farm that uses GMO seed or due to having planted seed that was GMO unbeknownst to our farm team. To be certified organic means that medicinal herbs and foods grown and sold do not contain GMOs.

Economic Impact Implications and trends:

1. Sales – We do not advertise **in any way** and yet we have been experiencing growth between 5 – 15% each year for the past five years.
2. Because the demand for certified organic medicinal herbs is growing substantially not only in the U.S. but also worldwide, Pacific Botanicals has been able to sponsor three other farms in the U.S. (one in Josephine County) to help support this growth. By “sponsor” we mean provide crops to grow for PB’s contracts (in addition to what we can grow on our land) so farmers have a guaranteed income in advance (as long as there are no crop failures), share technical data about seed propagation, transplanting, harvesting and drying herbs. We purchased close to \$250,000 in crops from these farmers annually over the past three years. Even with the support of our sponsored growers, we are still having to reach out to international sources for certified organic herbs that could be produced domestically with the support of NON GMO and rural initiatives.
3. Customer Base – 25,000 PLUS customers from all over the world purchase certified organic herbs from Pacific Botanicals on an annual basis. More and more individuals and nutraceutical companies are looking for a trusted source of certified organic herbs. Because of this growth that we are seeing we have contracted with another local certified organic grower to assist in helping grow the herbs required for customer contracts.
4. Number of full time employees: 14 – majority of individuals have been here over ten years. Seasonal Field Crew: 10-15 (April to November each year). Many of these individuals have also been coming back for 10 plus years. Wages for hourly employees range anywhere from \$13.00/hr. to \$25.00/hr.

All full time employees live in Josephine County.

5. Pacific Botanicals is a leader in organic farming production. Mark Wheeler, the owner of Pacific Botanicals, was one of the original farmers who was involved in developing the certified organic standards in Oregon and was one of the farmers that supported organic farm audits well before there were formal organizations to do such things.

The Future WITHOUT GMO Crop bans

1. Although this issue significantly impacts Josephine County – the bigger issue is the ability for certified organic growers of food and herbs throughout the world to be able to continue to purchase NON GMO seed.
2. With the growth of the certified organic movement, rural communities should be ENCOURAGED to grow these herbs and foods – not discouraged because of GMO contamination.
3. Property Rights Infringement – for those who choose to farm certified organic crops they should not have to be concerned about pollen drift from nearby GMO crops.

Toni Corrente-Evans
Chief Operations Officer
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