



## **TESTIMONY**

### **House Committee on Judiciary**

**March 16, 2017**

### **OFB Opposes HB 2739**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. The Oregon Farm Bureau Federation (OFB) urges your opposition to HB 2739. This bill would hold seed patent holders of genetically engineered (GE) crops financially responsible if a GE plant is found where it was not intentionally planted. OFB is concerned that this would impact grower access to advanced technologies in agriculture.

By way of background, OFB is Oregon's largest grassroots agriculture association, representing 7,000 farming and ranching families across the state. Our mission is to promote educational improvement, economic opportunity, and social advancement for our members and the farming, ranching, and natural resources industry as a whole.

OFB has long supported all types of agriculture in Oregon: organic, conventional, GE, and Identity Preserved. Coexistence has, and does work for Oregon farmers and ranchers. It has for over 100 years. The Legislature reaffirmed this in 2015 with the passage of HB 2509. This bill instituted a statewide policy of coexistence and voluntary mediation to resolve disputes between neighboring farmers. This bill is just now being implemented, and OFB urges the Legislature to let HB 2509 play out before layering new mandates that pick winners and losers between farmers.

We have additional concerns with HB 2739. The broad definition of "genetically engineered" in the bill could capture a wider variety of seeds than intended—putting at risk the work of local seed breeders and university researchers. The end result would be to stifle innovation and access to advanced technologies in agriculture. Also, seed patent holders have no control over what the end user does with a product. With liability for "treble damages" and no control over the growing methods used by farmers, many seed companies could stop selling certain varieties in our state, limiting choices for Oregon farmers.

OFB supports the development and utilization of new and existing practices and technologies to benefit agriculture; all production methods are important. It is for this reason that we oppose HB 2739. HB 2739 vilifies technologies in agriculture and will result in fewer choices for farm and ranch families.

**Please support Oregon farmers and ranchers, and vote 'NO' on HB 2739**