

Testimony in support of SB 790
Billy Don Robinson
Legislative Committee Chair
Native Plant Society of Oregon

Senate Bill 790 is designed to ensure the Legislature of the State of Oregon has academically verified information concerning the catastrophic invasive species *Arundo donax* and its associated organisms.

Current research simply does not address new information demonstrating radically increased threats to Oregon's rivers, lakes, and streams from genetically engineered and traditionally developed new cultivars of *Arundo donax*.

Current research also fails to take into account the trend to rising temperatures in Eastern Oregon. This is crucial because the key assertion that *Arundo donax* cannot escape plantations lies in the fact that it is too cold for it to do so. This is no longer the case, and will become increasingly so with the passage of every year.

For example, new cultivar, Nile Fiber, is especially concerning. The patent application states “*Arundo donax* ‘Nile Fiber’ is a new and unique cultivar characterized by its lack of serrated leaf margins, vigorous growth, dark purple bands below node sections, thick wall, ease in propagation, and usefulness in biomass production such as producing superior fiber for making pulp and paper. The growth rate of ‘Nile Fiber’ can be 12 feet of vertical growth in 25 days. ‘Nile Fiber’ reaches about 8 to 10 meters in height with a spread of 3 to 5 meters in 2 to 3 years when planted from a single billet section.” US 20140075628 P1.

At last count, there were 48 patents pending to genetically engineer by splicing genes onto *Arundo donax* to make it cold hardy, drought resistant and saline tolerant. Please see the attached testimony for more details

I also attached a document from the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation to demonstrate the devastating effect of traditional *Arundo donax*. Their independent research echoes that of the California Invasive Plants Council in research for the California State Water Board.

Arundo donax is already a perfectly adapted catastrophic invasive species, per CTUIR and CalIPC.

Any research that states *Arundo donax* cannot escape plantations in any part of Oregon is hopelessly out of date.

An up-to-the-minute analysis that factors in current genetically modified organisms and updated climate models is crucial if Oregon's streamside habitats and ocean beaches are to remain viable for future generations of Oregonians in a form we all know and love today.

I am sending links to two documents in support of SB 790. These come from HB 2183 from the 2015 session. Please include them in the testimony in support of SB 790.

Dr. Kevin Weitemeir

<https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2015R1/Downloads/CommitteeMeetingDocument/62560>

Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation

<https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2015R1/Downloads/CommitteeMeetingDocument/62563>

My written testimony will be attached.

Thanks so very much for your support and kindness in this matter.

Billy Don Robinson

Legislative Committee Chair

Native Plant Society of Oregon

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"This land is your land!" Woody Guthrie.

"Collectively, human decisions and practices can either continue to degrade the world that nurtures all living entities - or begin to restore it."

- Sustainable Sites Initiative 2008 Draft Guidelines and Performance Benchmarks

Practically speaking, a life that is vowed to simplicity, appropriate boldness, good humor, gratitude, unstinting work and play, and lots of walking brings us close to the actually existing world and its wholeness." -Gary Snyder