

March 22, 2017

Dear Senate on Environment and Natural Resources Committee

We are writing in Support for SB1037

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.

We hope you support join us in supporting SB1037,

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