

Senate Bill 1037 testimony from Chad Giffin Gates, Raptor Creek Farm

Senate Environment & Natural Resources Committee - Hearing date: April 12, 2017

Testimony from Chad Giffin Gates, Raptor Creek Farm in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 1037

I live and farm in Grants Pass, Oregon. I represent the next generation of farmers, Raptor Creek Farm that grows food for Josephine County Food Bank, and Southern Oregon Seed Growers Association.

Every year at Raptor Creek Farm we collaborate with seed farmers, in 2016 we helped to process an estimated \$6,500- worth of seed for them and saved and distributed the bi-product an accounted 3,000 pounds of squash meat to the recipients of the Josephine County Food Bank. These numbers are growing every year, this year we are certifying our processing kitchen organic so we can handle a growing and larger volume of seed crops. We estimate this year \$12,000 worth of seed crops will pass through our kitchen; most of these seed crops has a bi-product of produce, which we save for human consumption. At Raptor Creek Farm, we have begun growing our own seed crops as a fundraiser to help support the work of the farm. In 2016, we raised nearly \$5,000 as a fundraiser for the farm, we do not sell food, but we do grow crops like squash that we can harvest both the meat and seed from and sell the seed. This Bill will support these efforts.

As a representative of the next generation of farmers, I am deeply concerned about the consolidation and monopolization of the seed and chemical industry, which is deeply rooted, in the conventional agricultural industry. I look forward to growing my career in the agriculture and seed industry myself and I would like to be able to grow a Beet, Chard, Corn, or Alfalfa seed crop without fear of GE contamination.

There are huge market opportunities available for us if we maintain our county GE Free! As a young farmer, I can say for me to have a future with entrepreneur opportunities in the seed world is huge! I am currently collaborating with and shadowing a large conventional farm my neighbor. This farmer used to grow some of these GE crops, now I am working with him to directly explore and open up more market opportunities and profit centers around non-GE seed crops.

With the growing challenges facing the agricultural industry-we especially need more young farmers to join the ranks of our aging farmer population, last thing we need is more corporate control of our seed supply, please support this bill and keep the big seed companies out of our small county!

Support democracy let the people of Josephine County be heard please Support this Bill!