

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

Testimony from Phoenix Grange #779 in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 1037

PHOENIX GRANGE #779 RESOLUTION:

RESOLUTION FOR LOCAL SEED & CROP PROTECTION FROM GENETICALLY ENGINEERED CROPS

WHEREAS, crops can be cross-pollinated by pollen from a genetically engineered (GE/GMO) crop that may be growing miles away and if that occurs the farmer cannot legally sell, save or plant that seed since it is considered to be patented; and

WHEREAS, Oregon wheat growers state-wide could not sell their wheat crop for months when GE wheat was found on one eastern Oregon farm; and

WHEREAS, genetically engineered pollen trespass onto a family farm is a real threat and could lead to the necessary step of the non-GE farm having to destroy their crop to comply with the law; and

WHEREAS, Oregon grows a majority of the nation's vegetable seeds and is ranked in the top 5 internationally for seed production; and

WHEREAS, a growing number of seed/food buyers reject or will not purchase GE or genetically modified (GM) seed/food, especially in export markets; and

WHEREAS, family farmers across the country have lost billions of dollars in recent years due to inadvertent contamination of their crops by genetically engineered pollen, including but not limited to alfalfa, corn, wheat, sugar beets, canola, bent grass, rice, soy; and

WHEREAS, the rights to protect local farmers' crops from harmful effects of GE crops were stripped away in a 2013 special session Grand Bargain, which created a statewide preemption without corresponding protection for farmers; and

WHEREAS, Oregon has diverse geography and climate and a one-size-fits-all approach to overriding local control is not appropriate for this issue in Oregon; and

WHEREAS, the process of co-existence with GE crops failed in Josephine and Jackson Counties in Oregon with the exit of the largest producer of GE crops walking out on months of neutral party farmer-to-farmer talks aimed at co-existence.

BE IT RESOLVED, that Phoenix Grange #779 supports local counties in Oregon having the right to create GE-free zones—areas free of genetically engineered seeds and plants.