

## **Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources Hearing date: April 12, 2017**

### **Testimony from Carol Valentine, Selma, SUPPORT SB 1037**

My name is Carol Valentine; I'm speaking in support of SB 1037. I live in Selma, at the southern end of Josephine County, in the Illinois Valley, which has over 17, 000 residents. I am here to represent them., and I am a constituent of Sen. Baertschiger.

I believe all local jurisdictions should be able to consider their own agricultural needs at the ballot box. But I ask this committee to, at the very least, respect the ordinance that was passed by the voters of my county. Our reasonable measure allowed farmers a full year to phase out any GE crops. If farmers in other regions choose not to restrict GMOs, SB 1037 would allow that. That is not what my county has chosen.

During the campaign for the GE Plant Ordinance, I was the organizer for the Illinois Valley. Our town hall was attended by community members from across the political spectrum who were alarmed that a biotech company from Switzerland, which could not legally grow their products in their own country, was using our county as a testing ground for their GE sugar beets, in undisclosed locations that turned out in some cases to be very near farms growing non-GE crops.

Josephine County residents are generally strong on property rights. But they chose to put in place in common sense protections for family farmers because they know pollen does not respect property lines. They were also concerned about pesticide resistant super weeds and super bugs that have become hugely problematic in other areas.

Our farms remain at risk of contamination because the state has not established any protections. We also have hundreds, if not thousands of gardeners in the Illinois Valley. Many of us save seeds and need to protect the integrity of the food we grow for our families. Our needs are generally not considered when people talk about this issue, but I ask the committee to keep us in mind.

GE crops have expanded beyond commodity crops. GE apples and GE potatoes could contaminate common backyard crops. My husband and I grow both of these foods. My neighbors next door at Deer Crk. Orchards grow organic apples commercially for baby food. My neighbors across the road grow potatoes commercially. Both would face serious loss if their crops were contaminated.

I know I speak for many hundreds of others like myself who look to the legislature to stand with our strong farming community and repair the social contract that has been damaged in Josephine County by supporting SB 1037.

Thank you.