

Senate Environment & Natural Resources Committee
12 April 2017
Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 1037, GE seeds local control bill
from Sandra Bishop, Our Family Farms

Chair Dembrow, members of the Committee. For the record, my name is Sandra Bishop, representing Our Family Farms.

Thank you for allowing us to testify today in support of SB 1037. You will hear from farmers, specialty seed growers, and food-based businesses from throughout the state that depend on uncontaminated, non-GMO seeds and plants, both conventional and organic.

Oregon Farmers Need Protection in relation to issues related to (GE) genetically engineered commodity crops & seeds grown in Oregon.

We are here today to ask the Oregon legislature to address **the policy void** created in 2013 when the Legislature pre-empted local jurisdictions and communities from adopting local protections to address problems with GE crops. Oregon farmers are at risk.

There are no protections for farmers at the state level.

There are no real protections at the federal level. Federal oversight for GE crops is so limited that nationwide, both 'deregulated' (commercialized) and experimental GE crops have caused billions of dollars in damage to farmers through contamination from non-GE crops.

Local determination is essential. The **diversity of seed is in danger**. Currently there is more demand than availability for organic seed, needed to grow organic food.

The **United States is importing organic food and feed crops from Europe and Asia**. Oregon has some of the best seed producing regions in the world, and a fast growing organic sector, our **lack of protection from GE crop contamination puts our farmers at a disadvantage in the market**, and in some cases at risk to lose not only their crops but their livelihood.

Please listen carefully today to the science and the facts. There is a lot of passion around GMO and GE seed and crop issues, but we are not here today to argue the merits of GE seeds or products. We are here to ask that you put the power back into the hands of your rural farming areas – let the farmers and local jurisdictions around the state self-determine what works for agriculture in their area.

I'd also like to draw your attention to a letter of support from Co-chief Sponsor Senator Lew Frederick. He very clearly and succinctly sums up the science and the very real risk of not supporting SB 1037.

Thank you for your work on this important issue.

Sandra Bishop

541-345-5001 cell/text Our Family Farms, and a coalition of 4 other organizations.