



TESTIMONY

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

April 2, 2019

Oregon Farm Bureau Concerns on SB 885

Oregon Farm Bureau has concerns with SB 885. As a reference, the Oregon Farm Bureau Federation (OFB) is the state's most comprehensive general agricultural association, representing over 6,700 farm and ranch families in Oregon who make up a significant part of our rural communities.

SB 885 would codify the 500 acres set up by HB 2427 (2013) and HB 3382 (2015). The current language in ORS 570.450 that sunsets July 1, 2019, was designed for research purposes to understand the threats and opportunities related to canola production in the Willamette Valley. The OSU Report¹ concluded that canola posed no different threats to other Brassicaceae crops when subjected to the same Best Practice Management (BPM) growing regulations.

HB 3382 directed the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) to “develop recommendations regarding means for ensuring the coexistence of the production of canola and the production of other agricultural crops...The department shall develop the recommendations based on the information and recommendations reported by [OSU].”² ODA submitted a report with four policy options within existing authorities and where additional authorities would be required to the Oregon Legislature on November 15, 2018. OFB supports a resolution within ODA's existing authorities and has concerns with creating a precedent of patchwork statutes to address coexistence concerns.

OFB participated in ODA's Rules Advisory Committee (RAC) following the OSU report through until March of 2019. The RAC was continued to recommend a solution following on the recommendations from OSU. During the RAC, OFB strongly advocated for a coexistence solution handled within ODA and their existing authorities. We remain concerned that codifying acre limits into statute for any crop is problematic and bad precedent for Oregon Agriculture across our diverse crops and cropping practices. When the state begins to set production limits, promote certain crops over others, or suppress one commodity to encourage

¹ OSU Canola Report.

<https://www.oregon.gov/ODA/shared/Documents/Publications/Administration/HB2427ReportCanola.pdf>

² ODA Report.

<https://www.oregon.gov/ODA/shared/Documents/Publications/Administration/CanolaHB3382Report.pdf>

the cultivation of another, it strips the farmer's autonomy to grow food and fiber in response to market demands.

OFB fully supports finding a solution to protect the unique and historical attributes of Oregon Specialty Seed industry and allow for the flexibility for farmers to explore new markets with canola seed production. OFB has members who cultivate specialty seeds, canola and other crops whom all have concerns and an interest in the resolution of this issue. OFB believes a solution can be agreed to within ODA and their existing authorities, which does not require commodity-specific legislation. OFB will continue to engage in coexistence conversations with growers, state agencies, and interested parties to promote and strengthen Oregon Agriculture's diversity, but we cannot support moving forward with SB 885 at this time.

Thank you for your time and our concerns on SB 885. For more information, please contact Jonathan Sandau at sandau@oregonfb.org.