

Dear Chair Holvey and Members of the Committee:

Greetings. My name is Seven Stevens, and I am a contractor, gardener, educator, and food security advocate living in Portland. I am writing today to request your support for **HB 2882 and the -2 amendment**.

It is the right of business owners to be treated fairly in the eyes of the law. These great United States of ours has fallen pray to the will and pocket books of large corporations, leaving many a small business owner struggling, or in bankruptcy. I strongly believe that it is the function of the legislature to ensure a level playing field for all business owners, regardless of size.

Instead, what the agricultural industry has seen develop over the last twenty years is an untenable situation: Small farmers are being held accountable for the random seed drift of genetically engineered (GE) seeds, and the subsequent contamination of their Non-GE crops. How can this situation be considered anything other than ludicrous? How is a farmer going to fence out seeds that are carried on the wind and transported by birds? Are they meant to control the forces of nature?

HB 2882 was created in order to bring sanity and fairness, leveling the playing field for all business owners. With GE seeds contaminating crops across the Americas, Oregon stands as a final frontier for heirloom and specialty seed developers and growers. It is your job to protect them.

Written to blaze this very path of protection, HB 2882 was meant to address patent-holder or manufacturer liability for GE contamination events in Oregon. Billions of dollars of future revenues are at stake. Why is it that the demands of large corporations outweigh the needs of locally owned businesses?

And this industry is profitable. Generating over \$50 million annually, why is it that Oregon's specialty seed growers currently stand unprotected from a variety of legal entanglements? Without regulation of GE crops, these farmers are vulnerable to unfavorable legal precedents concerning patents; rules that were written before the advent of GE seeds and their subsequent contamination events. Our antiquated laws need to be updated to keep up with the fast-paced industry of GE foods. Current regulations are just not providing the requisite protections.

While I ultimately want to see patent holders and manufacturers held responsible for GE pollen drift contamination, so farmers aren't pitted against farmers, I support any legislation that calls for the regulation of GE crops in Oregon.

Addressing GE contamination is important to me because all people deserve access to clean and healthy food, as well as the ability to maintain small businesses that support a profitable market. GE is new science, too new to know the lasting affects of its introduction into the food chain. Further, farmers deserve to grow the crops that are

supported by their consumers, without risk of contamination and lawsuits. With the threat of GE contamination on local growers, the rights of both farmers and consumers are threatened.

Thank you for the consideration and for your service.

Warmly,

Seven Stevens

5110 NE Cully Blvd, Portland, OR, 97218