



The Oregon Organic Coalition (OOC) is a trade support organization, working to advance the development and growth of the organic industry and community in Oregon. The OOC represents volunteer stakeholders--farmers, wholesalers, processors, organic certifiers, scientists, consumers and retailers. We lead promotional activities and advocate for state policy to support and grow Oregon's organic trade.

SUPPORT HB 2882

Dear Chair Holvey and Members of the Committee:

HB 2882 was written to create patent holder or manufacturer liability for genetically engineered (GE) contamination events in Oregon. To date, the State of Oregon has failed to protect farmers from unwanted contamination from genetically engineered crops, which leaves farmers vulnerable to economic damages and infringes on their rights to farm with traditional seeds. In fact, over the past decade, GE contamination events, and threats of contamination, have cost farmers billions of dollars—including Oregon farmers—in rejected sales, lost exports and closed agricultural markets.

Unwanted transgenic contamination is a very real issue for Oregon farmers and the burden is particularly impactful for those who utilize organic practices, considering the USDA National Organic Program (NOP) standards strictly prohibit organic operations from using genetically engineered organisms, and for those who have a vested interest in exports, as many nations in the world have banned the sale of genetically engineered crops. Oregon is unique in that we are one of the top five (5) seed growing regions in the world and we are a strong exporter of agricultural products. The specialty seed industry is valued at \$400 million and the vegetable specialty seed contained within that is worth \$50 million annually.

Oregon's Organic sector, offers a unique and growing economic opportunity. According to 2017 Agricultural Census Data, Oregon has 483 certified organic farms, operating on more than 175,000 acres, with Oregon ranked 5th in the nation in organic farmgate sales, valued at over \$277 million ([NASS 2017 Census Report](#)). 91% of Oregon households purchase organic products on a regular basis, with the organic trade trending at near double digit growth. Economically and environmentally, the future looks organic. Organic farms can be up to 35% more profitable than conventional operations and, in counties where there is a high concentration of organic production, poverty rates drop by 1.35%, with incomes increasing by \$2000 annually ([Penn State University economic research](#)).

Protecting Oregon's non-GE and organic farmers is sound economic decision-making on the part of our Legislature. While we ultimately want to see patent holders and manufacturers held responsible for GE pollen drift contamination, so that farmers are not pitted against other farmers, I support legislation that call for the regulation of GE crops in Oregon. This is a positive move for the future of farming in our state. Please vote HB 2882 out of committee with a "do pass" recommendation. Thank you for the consideration and for your service.

Stacy Ann Kraker, President, Oregon Organic Coalition