

Dear Chair Holvey and Members of the Committee:

My name Chris Hardy and am the owner of Hardy Seeds in Southern Oregon. I am writing to let you know I support HB 2882 and the -2 amendment. I want affirmative steps taken to protect Oregon's position as a world-class specialty seed producing region, in a way that does not pit farmer against farmer.

In 2013, our farm pulled up our Swiss chard seed crop under a 2012 contract with Fedco Seed Company after a conversation with Syngenta Ag, who told us they would soon be planting GE sugar beets nearby, within the 4 mile USDA recommended isolation distance to prevent cross pollination.

They said they didn't want to hurt their relationship with the property owner. They planted anyhow knowing that it would directly threaten by likely contamination our own contracted biennial seed crop already in the ground.

After many months of farmer to farmer meetings at OSU Extension that included Syngenta, they sent their attorney to advise dozens of Southern Oregon's seed growers that they were no longer interested in working together.

Seed organizations such as the WVSSA employ many ideas suggested by the USDA to limit GE contamination, but this has not stopped the contamination.

In the last few years we have seen growing numbers in the billions of dollars of damages to farmers due to inadvertent contamination incidences and simply the threat from contamination. Wheat, alfalfa, canola, beta and other crops have been contaminated and have hurt Oregon's agricultural industry and many farmers in our state.

With the passage of SB 863 in 2013 by the Oregon legislature, the ability of our state's diverse, geographically distinct communities to protect themselves against eventual contamination incidences has been removed, and will continue to hurt farmers in our state. Immediate actions are needed to keep patent holders accountable for pollen drift contamination, and not create a conflict between farmers.

In alignment with growing trends for non-GMO and organic seeds and goods, we need to mandate an economic analysis of the benefits of Oregon having GE-free zones for safe production of high-value, non-GE crops like organic seed.

Protection of seed resources in Oregon must be our first priority for agriculture in Oregon. Please give HB 2882 a 'do pass' recommendation out of committee and support any legislation that calls for the regulation of GE crops in Oregon.

Thanks, for your consideration and your service,

Chris Hardy  
Hardy Seeds  
Ashland, Oregon