

Testimony in Support of HB 2882

Dear Chair Holvey and Members of the Committee:

My name is Courtney Williams. I am a consumer of non-genetically-engineered foods and a digital content producer who does *pro bono* work for seed growers and organic food organizations, in Ashland, Oregon. I am writing to request your support for HB 2882.

HB 2882 was written to create patent holder or manufacturer liability for genetically engineered (GE) contamination events in Oregon. Over the past decade, GE contamination events, and threats of contamination, have cost U.S. farmers—including Oregon farmers—billions of dollars in rejected sales, lost exports, and closed agricultural markets.

Farmers lack protections from GE contamination because Oregon does not regulate GE crops. Further, with the exception of Jackson County, all Oregon counties are preempted from making decisions regarding seed cultivation in their jurisdictions, leaving a large regulatory gap.

Addressing GE contamination is important to me because past, merely incidental, legal precedent that was unfavorable to non-GE farmers, in cases of GE contamination events, has put some non-GE farms and farmers out of business, and the staying power of non-GE and organic farmers, farms and crops is important to me; without them, (1) citizens would likely have access only to GE crops and/or (2) citizens would not know what they are eating and feeding their families; and (3) most GE crops are engineered to be grown with pesticides and herbicides, most of which are carcinogenic or insufficiently tested. Additionally, historical behavior demonstrates that corporations that engineer and sell GE-seeds are guided by their financial bottom-line, aka their highest profit; therefore, the food supply they generate is governed by decisions based on their profits, not by considerations of food nutrition, biological diversity, regeneration and long-term sustainability of soil and resources, nor on the importance of not having cancer-causing chemicals in the daily food supply. That being the case (or even partially the case), means that the health of citizens' food supply would be governed by the corporation's balance sheet. The perseverance of non-GE and organic farmers, farms and crops, means that farming practices and a food supply guided by the values of health, nutrition, regeneration and biodiversity, also perseveres and that citizens can choose this kind of food for themselves and their families. Oregon has a magnificent opportunity to protect the food supply by protecting non-GE farmers, farms and crops, with the action of HB 2882 and I fully support it.

Please vote HB 2882 out of committee with a "do pass" recommendation. Thank you for the consideration and for your service.

Signature:



5-7-19

Courtney Williams

Ashland, Oregon