

Submitter: Kenny Smith
On Behalf Of: Universal Seed
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources
Measure: SB789

When a gardener or a farmer plants a seed, it is with the expectation that the plant will look like the picture that is on the package. This is the main objective with of the specialty seed industry, to produce high quality vegetable seed.

Oregon has developed a reputation for producing high quality vegetable seed, and like any reputation, once damaged, it is nearly impossible to restore. I am highly concerned about the damage unrestricted canola production will do to Oregon as a seed production area, and possibly other aspects of Oregon agriculture.

Canola is in the same family as broccoli, cabbage and mustards just to name a few of the high value Brassicaceae seed crops, which means it will readily cross pollinate with these crops. If canola crosses with these crops, the end product will not look like the picture on the package, and you will have a contaminated lot of seed. Think of unregulated canola as secondhand smoke to the specialty seed industry. A smoker has the right to smoke, but not the right to damage someone else. There are laws to protect against the potential damage that a smoker can do, just like there are laws limiting canola's impact. In fact, Central Oregon, and Skagit Valley, and up until recently the Willamette Valley had laws protecting growers from the dangers of canola. Central Oregon is protected under OAR 603-052-0860, and Skagit Valley is protected under WAC16-326-040.

SB789 is a workable compromise between the specialty seed industry and the few farmers in the valley that desire to grow canola.

As an agronomist for Universal Seed, and Vice President of the Willamette Valley Specialty Seed Association, every paycheck I, and many others receive are dependent on the strength of the Specialty Seed Industry.

Please protect the Willamette Valley from unrestricted canola. Please vote yes on SB789.