

3/8/2023

Senate Committee on Natural Resources

Re: Opposed to SB 789, restrictions on Canola Production in the Willamette Valley

Dear Chair Golden, Vice Chair Girod and members of the committee,

My name is Marie Bowers, I am a fifth generation farmHer in Linn and Lane Counties. We primarily grow grass seed, wheat and meadowfoam but have previously grown two different brassica crops: turnips and canola.

I am opposed to SB 789, restriction on Canola production in the Willamette Valley.

Let's be honest here. There are seed farmers on both sides of this issue, which some in support of this bill are people I greatly respect. We are all here testifying because we have economic interests involved. Both sides have potential financial gain.

I support people making money, what I don't support is the Oregon legislature picking who makes that money and what crops they can or cannot grow.

On our farm we are always looking for a new crop that 1) will grow in our soil types and 2) work with our current equipment. Growing & rotating different crops that are not related (i.e. grass vs brassica) allow farmers to have greater diversity in management so we can better control weeds and disease. Simply speaking it makes our toolbox bigger.

The reality is, since the ban of field burning the Willamette Valley, our pest, disease and weed pressure has increased immensely. Our seed quality and purity has become a real issue. We need a diverse set of crops and tools to help manage these risks.

The canola issue has been work grouped and studied by Oregon State University (OSU) for nearly the last two decades. There is plenty of testimony addressing those findings. The bottom line is there is limited threat of growing canola to the other brassica crops. I would encourage you to read the OSU Study by Dr. Mallory Carol-Smith.

Farming evolves with technology and knowledge and so should Oregon's laws, just as we saw with Brucellosis bill right before this hearing.

I find it ironic that Oregon has these lofty renewable energy goals yet seeks to restrict the very crop that **potentially** could help meet those goals. Just last week there was a hearing on a bill that would mandate renewable diesel in place of petroleum diesel. The EPA has recently approved Canola feedstock as a source for renewable diesel. [Approval as renewable diesel feedstock a 'great win' for canola industry - January 2023](#)

The Oregon Legislature should not be limiting Oregon farmers' potential nor being shortsighted in their own goals. However, for farmers and the legislature the real solution should always be a balance of economic, social and environmental feasibility when growing crops and passing laws.

Year after year the Oregon Legislature continually makes our jobs as farmers harder from banning the tools we use to control pests, added labor costs and more taxes. I just ask that one legislative session that you, please, let us just farm.

**Please oppose SB 789.**