



Friends of Family Farmers ♦ PO Box 751 ♦ Junction City, OR 97448

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

My name is Alice Morrison, and I am grateful for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 789. I am here on behalf of Friends of Family Farmers, a statewide nonprofit serving more than 1,600 small and midsize, highly diversified, local and regional market farmers, including many specialty seed growers.

Canola has been a looming threat for the specialty seed industry for many years. The biological fact that this crop can cross breed and contaminate specialty brassica seed has not changed. The fact that other regions across the world have lost their ability to grow those seeds because of canola contamination, and the fact that canola is really good at spreading and becoming a ditch weed that's impossible to eradicate also have not changed. These facts are acknowledged by the global seed growing community. And yet, we are back at the legislature to confirm that lifting the protections would devastate the valuable specialty seed industry. It's time to make the protected districts permanent and give Oregon's seed growers peace of mind.

The specialty seed industry is a huge asset to Oregon. Not only does it produce seeds that grow millions of pounds of food here and across the world and generate tens of thousands of dollars per acre according to the recent study from Highland Economics, it also provides a pathway to viability for small acreage farmers. Because the value to space ratio for specialty seed crops is so high, this is a way for folks on small acreage to produce a good living and support their families. I know many farms in our network that grow only seeds, but even more who grow a few seed crops a year to increase their income, produce some stability in year round cash flow, and make the most of their limited resources.

In a Capital Press article last year, opponents of the protected district said that contamination hadn't happened so far, so that proves that we do not need the protections. This is akin to getting dressed to go into the rain, and saying that you're not wet so you should take off your raincoat. We are so lucky to have the right conditions to grow these types of seed crops in Oregon. This is because of the protected districts. We urge you to maintain the protected districts and do no harm to the specialty seed industry. Please support SB789.

Sincerely,

Alice Morrison
Co-Director
Friends of Family Farmers