

8 March 2023

To: Senate Natural Resources Committee

From: Jo Erikson

Re: Support for SB 789 (Permanent Canola Restrictions in the Willamette Valley)

Dear Chair Golden, and Members of the Senate Natural Resources Committee,

My name is Jo Erikson and I live and farm in Corvallis, Oregon. I am the co-owner of Avoca Seed, a certified organic specialty seed production farm also located in Corvallis. I am writing to you today in complete support of making permanent the existing restrictions on growing canola (aka, rapeseed) in the Willamette Valley Protected District.

Our family farm is small but mighty in the world of organic Brassica seed production. Located within the current Willamette Valley Protected District and with excellent isolation for many open pollinated seeds, including all species of Brassica, we are fortunate to have built a thriving, successful farm business growing certified organic vegetable seed on contract for seed companies nationwide. One of our core Brassica seed crops is Dazzling Blue Kale<sup>1</sup>, a newly bred variety of lacinato type kale developed on our farm by my partner, Hank Keogh. If you've ever eaten a delicious blue-green lacinato kale with a purple/pink midrib, it was probably Dazzling Blue, and you're welcome.

This variety has grown popular enough that our small farm can no longer produce enough seed each year to supply the demand of seed companies across the country. What we do now is maintain the varietal integrity of Dazzling Blue with our production on our farm and provide the stock, or source, seed for other growers to produce on even larger scales to meet the industry demand.

This is the sort of high-value specialty seed production that the Willamette Valley Protected District is meant to protect. The type of open pollinated, organic breeding work that results in seed innovation and plates full of culinary delights.

We likely would not have been able to develop this new variety if it weren't for the canola restrictions and cross-pollinating protections provided by the pinning map. As so many others have testified and the Highland Economic report states plainly, removing the restrictions on canola production in this unique region would be devastating. Without the passage of SB 789 those restrictions and protections are gone.

I urge you to vote yes on SB 789.

Sincerely,

Jo Erikson

Co-owner, Avoca Seed  
Corvallis, Oregon

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1 Uprising Seed: <https://uprisingorganics.com/products/kale-dazzling-blue>  
Territorial Seed Company: <https://territorialseed.com/products/kale-dazzling-blue>  
High Mowing Organic Seeds: <https://www.highmowingseeds.com/dazzling-blue-kale.html>