

Submitter: Dean Freeborn

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources

Measure: SB789

I have farmed in the Rickreall area my whole life, and have seen many crops come and go. I've grown probably 30 different crops in my lifetime, and was one of the first to grow turf type tall fescue that is so prevalent today. I became interested in canola in the early 2000s reading about its benefits in magazines I take out of the midwest.

Then in 2005, ODA made one of the biggest blunders possible by changing their administrative rule about the Willamette Valley Protected District from something that was initially created to ensure isolation of canola from industrial rapeseed, to a rule that banned canola entirely. Of course at the time, canola was worth about \$0.11/lb, so most farmers could have cared less, but the Specialty seed guys knew what they were doing. They had created an area they would have control over without threat of competition. In other countries & regions, including New Zealand and areas of Europe, canola and rapeseed production expanded as biodiesel became popular, and then as demand for canola as a food and feed products grew. Growers in those places had to work together, but thanks to ODA, here they did not. The ones that wanted canola were simply 'out'.

We were able to get into some limited research conducted by OSU in 2007, and when our first crop surpassed 4000 lbs to the acre, we were sold. It cleaned up volunteer ryegrass proficiently being able to use different herbicide chemistries, and the post harvest management was simple - 1 pass with a rotary mower and all leftover plant material (& nutrients) was returned to the soil and ready for minimum tillage into wheat (1 pass with a disk ripper & harrow before planting was it).

Meanwhile, the specialty seed industry dug in their heels, throwing every argument at the wall hoping something would stick, through years of ODA advisory committee meetings. The goalposts moved constantly - we'd explain or prove why something wasn't an issue and it was onto the next complaint. Ultimately, they had more time, money, and resources all around that led to the eventual house bill 2427 in 2013. We were actually glad to get a 500 acre number at the time, to allow some other farmers to see the benefits we had. No one has grown canola & walked away saying they don't think it's worth it & don't want to grow it again - several just couldn't get enough acres with a 500 acre cap to make it worth factoring in before now, or didn't want to jump through the extra hoops with government permitting.

When the specialty seed industry & organic groups pushed for the 2013 bill & subsequent study, they implied they would be open to living by the results. It's been 180° opposite of that. They've tried to discredit the OSU researchers, badmouth the

study itself (even though it was peer reviewed extensively), and have continued to argue for the control and market protection in the Willamette Valley District they have enjoyed since 2005.

It's time for this to END. We have wasted enough time and public resources protecting a small group of seed companies and the handful of farmers that grow for them. Coexistence is possible without the government involved, and government just needs to get out of the way and let growers figure this out like we've done for years on numerous other issues.

Oppose SB789.