

Submitter: Meg Whiteford

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources

Measure: SB789

Date: 04/09/2023

To: Senate Natural Resources Committee

From: Meg Whiteford / of the soil farm & apothecary

Re: Support for SB 789

Chair Golden, Vice Chair Girod, and Members of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources,

My name is Meg Whiteford, and I live in Roseburg and I am writing on behalf of my small family farm; of the soil farm & apothecary.

I am writing today in support of SB 789, which maintains current protections for the Willamette Valley's lucrative brassica vegetable seed industry.

I have supported the seed companies in this region over the span of my agricultural career- which has been these past 10 years. The work these growers are doing to cultivate and provide diverse, heirloom varieties of seed for farmers across Oregon and the world is important. Many of these specialty varieties being grown are open-pollinated seed- seed which needs extra care in spacing it away from additional crops in the same family to ensure no cross contamination of traits. Open-pollinated seed is important to continue integrating on small farms and private/public lands as it allows for species adaptation to specific regions as well as habitat for beneficial insects and pollinators.

We are at a pivot point with protecting the Willamette for this key industry, and for the biodiverse seed varieties that growers all over the world depend on. We must extend the protections indefinitely and protect what's good. There is a lot to lose here for the state financially & culturally! Here, as with so many public policies, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

SB789 is an extension of the current policy, enshrining the current protections and collaborative system in state law.

For these reasons, I strongly urge you to vote YES on SB 789 to ensure the Willamette Valley stays one of the vegetable seed capitals of the world, a very

special place for growing high-value seeds, and an economic powerhouse for our state.

Sincerely,

Meg Whiteford

Owner/Farmer/Herbslist

of the soil farm & apothecary