



February 14, 2024

Submitter: Karen Sowers

On Behalf Of: Pacific Northwest Canola Association

Committee: House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Comments submitted electronically via [Oregon Legislative Information System \(oregonlegislature.gov\)](https://www.oregonlegislature.gov)

RE: HB 4059-7 and HB-4059-8

Chairman Helm, and Members of the Committee,

The Pacific Northwest Canola Association appreciates the opportunity to provide written public testimony re: HB 4059. We offer the following comments in **opposition to Amendment-7**, and in **support of Amendment-8**:

Amendment -7 was surprising to see for several reasons:

- For the last 10+ years, **non-GMO** winter canola has been the majority, if not all, of the 500 acres planted in the Valley. There are very few exceptions when spring canola is planted, i.e. when fall seeding conditions are too dry to plant, or a winter or spring hard freeze kills the winter canola.
- We estimate that 90% of the winter canola grown in **all of OR, ID, and WA is non-GMO, including in the Valley**. Non-GMO hybrids offer great yield potential, weed control opportunities, and favorable economic returns. Winter canola acreage the last four years, based on USDA-FSA data is as follows:

Total winter canola acres in ID, OR, and WA:

2023: **64,522**

2022: **33,529***

2021: **37,247***

2021: **44,189**

* winter canola acreage was significantly lower in 2021-22 due to very dry seedbed moisture in the fall in many areas

- Growers in the Willamette Valley should have the choice to select what canola variety they plant based on what is agronomically best for their operation. That may (and should) include GMO (GE) options.
- There is zero scientific evidence brought forth for limiting GE canola to 500 acres, or for imposing an isolation distance of 6 miles.
- **We oppose Amendment -7.**

Amendment -8 makes agronomic, economic, and scientific sense for growers in the Valley. It is very evident that a lot of time, effort, thought and *research* has gone into the wording of Amendment -8. Production of canola does **not** need a cap on non-GMO or GMO acreage, and the isolation distance for GMO canola should not be double that of non-GMO canola. Even at three (3) miles, that exceeds the isolation distance of most, if not all, seed production crops in the U.S./North America. Contrary to the opinion of some folks, canola acres will not ramp up overnight, and growers will not be planting the entire farm to canola, whether that is small or larger acreage.

In closing, on behalf of the Pacific Northwest Canola Association, I encourage you to make your decisions based on science, and proven research about canola production in the Valley. Canola *can* coexist with other crops, specifically with other brassicas. Canola is an opportunity crop, not an 'issue.' With proper isolation distance and a robust pinning system, canola can provide much-needed economic and agronomic diversity to farmers who choose to grow it, and at the same time not interfere with specialty crop production.

Pacific Northwest Canola Association

Growing the canola industry in the Pacific Northwest through education, advocacy, and marketing

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The PNWCA **opposes HB 4059-7**, and **supports HB 4059-8**.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen Sowers".

Karen Sowers, Executive Director
Pacific Northwest Canola Association

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