

Submitter: suzia aufderheide

On Behalf Of: Foff

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

Measure: HB4059

Chair Helm, Vice Chairs Owens and Hartman, and members of the committee:

My name is suzia aufderheide and I have lived in ashland for more than 40 years. Brassica seed growing in the Willamette Valley is a vital part of our thriving small farm ecosystem here in Oregon. We are blessed to be able to grow seeds in our region that produce millions of pounds of food the world over. therefore, it is our duty to protect the ability of our farmers to grow vegetable seeds; allowing them to feed their families and communities through viable farm businesses. and the world through the food the seeds produce. I am writing to you to express support for HB 4059-7.

I care about seed farming in the Willamette Valley. I am grateful for the work of the committee, the named isolation districts and the limitation of GE canola in the WVPD. please remember the importance of what Oregon's seed growers bring to the table through the farming they enable, the rural economies their farms participate in and enliven, the crucial knowledge they hold and share and the need for food security through seed security.

This proposal already represents a huge compromise for the seed growers and we cannot afford to lose any more ground. When you consider HB 4059, please listen to the guidance of specialty seed growers and support the strongest possible option for Oregon.

Sincerely,

suzia aufderheide  
ashland 97520

Important study about the potential economic impacts of lifting the canola ban:

The Willamette Valley is 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. Currently, cultivation of rapeseed/canola, a low-value oilseed that can irreversibly undermine the vegetable seed industry through cross-contamination and increased pest and disease pressure, is capped at 500 acres in the Willamette Valley Protected District.

Dozens of seed companies work with hundreds of farmers to produce high quality seed in the region. Because plants in the Brassica family can easily cross with each other (think broccoli, kale, cabbage, etc) a complex system of isolation distances, mapping, and coordinated management have been created to ensure that the seed you buy from Willamette Valley growers is true to type – ie red cabbage is red cabbage, savoy cabbage is savoy cabbage, purple top turnip is purple top turnip etc. Because canola (raised and crushed for oil) is also in the Brassica family but is not typically managed the same as high quality seed, there have been restrictions on canola in the Willamette Valley for years.

An important study quantifying the major risk to seed farmers in the Willamette Valley was released in February 2023. The study measures the impact of dismantling the Willamette Valley Protected District on the valley's vibrant specialty vegetable seed sector.

Conducted by the non-partisan firm Highland Economics, key findings in the study include:

Brassica seed production, the seed most at risk from rapeseed/canola, produces average profits of \$1400 per acre for conventional, and \$32,000 per acre for organically grown seed. In contrast, rapeseed/canola produces profits of only \$190 per acre.

If, as is likely, rapeseed/canola were to eliminate brassica seed growing (setting aside the impacts to seed producers' investments and other crops) a loss of approximately \$15M in production value, and \$9.2M in direct and indirect labor income, would ensue. These figures do not include additional substantial losses from the Valley-based seed processing companies.

Other oilseed crops such as flax, sunflower, safflower, yellow mustard and camelina do not threaten specialty seed crops to the degree that canola does, and can be grown in the protected districts.