



HB 4059

Written testimony

(this includes a slight correction of the tons carbon sequestered per acre)

Chair Helm and members of the committee.

My name is Helle Ruddenklau and my husband and I farm outside of Amity. I was a member of the working group. It was the first time I have been actively involved in this issue, and I was impressed by the way the group was able to work positively together to try to find a path forward. I hope we can get this issue resolved this year.

I support large parts of the proposed bill, but I oppose the 500 acre cap of GE canola, and I request following Dr. Carol Mallory-Smith's expertise for determining isolation distances.

I believe we had good agreement on many aspects of coexistence including the use of a common pinning system which would give everyone an equal opportunity to produce brassica crops. There was also agreement on the need for isolation distances to ensure genetic purity can be maintained for the specialty seed industry, while allowing a broader opportunity for growing canola.

The Oregon Department of Agriculture did a good job of coming up with a plan which took into consideration the needs of the different stakeholders. However, we did not discuss GE canola in any meaningful way. In fact, the science is very clear, that GE brassicas should not be treated differently from conventional brassicas. Putting a permanent 500 acre cap on GE canola reduces the scientific credibility of this proposal. It also puts the State of Oregon in a position to favor one group of growers over another.

Our main crop is grass seed. It is the 3rd largest crop in Oregon and an economic driver for the state. One of the important societal benefits of grass seed, is its role in carbon sequestration. An average soil in the US sequesters around 20 tons of carbon per acre, but a typical soil used for grass seed production in Oregon sequesters 35 (this is my correction, previously I had written 36) tons of carbon per acre (data from Dr. Jennifer Moore, Research Soil Microbiologist with USDA in Corvallis). To grow grass seed, though, we need to keep the fields clean. As Dr. Carol Mallory-Smith stated in her testimony, one of the foundational truths of weed management is you need to have a good crop rotation. From Dr. Don Wysocky's written testimony, you can see we don't have a lot of viable options. We are in desperate need of a large acreage, broadleaf rotation crop in order to sustainably grow pure grass seed. Please allow us equal access and opportunity to be successful among Oregon's diverse agricultural systems.