

Submitter: Theodore Hake

On Behalf Of: SSGWO

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 Ted Hake and I am an Agricultural Consultant from Terrebonne, OR working with vegetable seed growers in the Willamette Valley in Oregon. Specialty Brassica seed growing in the Willamette Valley is a vital part of our thriving small, and large, farm ecosystems here in Oregon. We are so situated to be able to produce seeds in our region that produce millions of pounds of food the world over. It is our duty to protect the ability of our farmers to grow vegetable seeds, feeding their families through viable farm businesses, and the world through the food the seeds produce. I am writing to you to express support on 4059-7 and 4059-9. I strongly oppose 4059-8.

I care about seed farming in the Willamette Valley Protected District because I have seen the benefits to Oregon growers from producing high quality vegetable seeds over the past 30+ years. The Willamette Valley is one of the few places left in the world with the climate and lack of certain pest pressures where high quality and high value vegetable seed can still be produced.

Canola can be produced almost anywhere – high value brassica species cannot. One thing many in this argument fail to realize or express is that canola growers carry no risk to their crops from outcrossing – the outcrossing risk is completely borne by the high value brassica seed growers and other high value vegetable seed crops of Oregon growers ; crops which don't cross pollinate with canola, but crops that herbicide resistant canola seed will contaminate in the field and subsequently through the seed conditioning processes.

I am grateful for the work of the committee, the named isolation districts and the limitation of GE canola in the Willamette Valley Protected District. We urge you to remember what Oregon's seed growers bring to the table through the farming they enable, the rural economies their farms participate in, the crucial knowledge they hold and the need for food security through seed security. Specialty vegetable seed crops came to Oregon growers during WWII as Hitler destroyed vegetable seed stocks in their blitzkrieg across Europe. One only need to look at what has been going on between Ukraine and Russia to see that food security does still depends on adequate vegetable seed stocks.

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

Sincerely,

Ted Hake
Research Director SSGWO and TH Ag Consulting