

Submitter: Jennifer Davis

On Behalf Of: HB4059-7

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:

Dear Honored Chairs and Committee Members:

I am a small scale organic farmer, growing diverse mixed heirloom vegetables and some seed stocks in the beautiful Oregon Willamette Valley. I am writing to you to express support for HB 4059-7. And as a vegetable and seed farmer, I strongly urge you to oppose HB 4059-8.

The Willamette Valley, thanks to its ideal climate and soil profile, as well as lack of gmo canola seed contamination- is one of the few places left on the planet ideally suited for organic Brassica seed production.

Other places in the world where brassica seed has been traditionally grown are rapidly disappearing, with the introduction of gmo canola- a brassica crop which produces masses of yellow flowers with pollen which easily cross-pollinates with our organic brassica flowers via wind, bees, birds or animals.

After this cross pollination occurs- the seeds of organic brassica crops can no longer be certified to produce true to their original stock. This can easily destroy the entire brassica seed production of the Willamette Valley- a very lucrative and popular crop with global markets.

Organic brassicas include: Brussels sprouts, broccoli, kale, cabbage, collards, cauliflower, mustards and radishes.

These crops are proven by scientists to fight cancer and to help build bone mass. They are extremely popular crops served in millions of restaurants and at millions of grocery stores and farmers markets nationwide.

Canola, another brassica crop- which is only planted in huge swaths - can easily corrupt non-canola brassica crops via wind, insect or animal pollination.

Can you imagine no longer being able to enjoy a luscious plate of tender Brussels sprouts, a crisp Kale salad, or a nutritious and delicious side of Broccolini with your pasta? Or no more crunchy slaw to accompany your BBQ?

Can you envision a near future where it is difficult finding or affording these popular vegetables - these vegetables all from the Brassica family, which are scientifically proven to help fight cancer and build strong bones?

Your decision today on Canola production in the Willamette Valley- HB 4059-8 will have profound impacts on the future production of these Brassica vegetables.

Specialty Brassica seed growing in the Willamette Valley is a vital part of our thriving small farm ecosystem here in Oregon.

We are so lucky 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 grateful for the work of the committee, the named isolation districts and the limitation of GE canola in the WVPD.

I 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.

This proposal already represents a huge compromise for the seed growers and we cannot afford to lose any more ground. When you consider HB 4059-8, please listen to the guidance of specialty seed growers and support the strongest possible option for Oregon.

Sincerely,  
Jennifer Davis