

Dear Chair Holvey and Members of the Committee:

My name is Mitra Sticklen and my partner's name is Blake Rogers. We are family farmers with a 2-year old farmer-in-training, growing seeds and other crops, in the process of getting Organic certification for our farm and our processing facility. Our farm is in Jacksonville, OR (just between Applegate and Ruch) and our processing facility is in White City. Both are in Jackson County. Part of the reason we moved here is because it is a sanctuary for Organic farmers especially Organic seed farmers, and the community has spoken many times and voted to prove how vital it is that we protect Organic farmers and our Organic seed production sites. I am writing to request your support for *HB 2882.*

Addressing GE contamination is important to me because our family's future Organic certification will depend on our seeds being free of GE contamination. If drifting pollen from neighboring farms contaminates our seed crop, it will be rendered useless and considered a crop failure, not to mention that the seeds may fall and 'volunteer' themselves on our Organic farm in future years. This is a massive risk and very scary to our small family farm! We do not have deep pockets, nor corporate funding, so it is vital that we rise up as a community and speak up about how important it is for our legislators to pass protections for Organic farmers like us. If our crop were to be contaminated by GE pollen, we want to be able to hold the patent holder or manufacturer liable for our crop failure and the damages caused.

HB 2882 was written to create patent holder or manufacturer liability for genetically engineered (GE) contamination events in Oregon. Over the past decade, GE contamination events, and threats of contamination, have cost U.S. farmers *billions *of dollars—including Oregon farmers—in rejected sales, lost exports, and closed agricultural markets.

Farmers lack protections from GE contamination because Oregon does not regulate GE crops. Further, with the exception of Jackson County, all Oregon counties are preempted from making decisions regarding seed cultivation in their jurisdictions, leaving a large regulatory gap.

Current legal precedent is unfavorable for farmers contaminated through no fault of their own. The legal theories of trespass, nuisance, negligence, and strict liability are not useful in GE contamination cases stemming from pollen drift. Right to Farm laws have not been useful either.

While I ultimately want to see patent holders and manufacturers held responsible for GE pollen drift contamination so farmers aren't pitted against farmers, I support legislation that calls for the regulation of GE crops in Oregon.

Please vote HB 2882 out of committee with a "do pass" recommendation. Thank you for the consideration and for your service.

With Gratitude,
Mitra Sticklen and Blake Rogers