



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Testimony on SB 789

Chair Golden, Vice Chair Girod and member of the committee. For the Record, I'm Representative Anna Scharf, HD23 Polk and Yamhill Counties.

In full disclosure, I am married to a multigenerational family farmer who has been one of the canola growers since 2013, and I have personally been involved in this issue since 2012 when Friends of Family farmers sued the department of Agriculture over the agencies temporary rule allowing canola production in the Willamette Valley.

In 2013, 2 bills were introduced.

- SB433 would have banned canola in the entire state by restricting protected districts.
- HB2427 would prohibit growing canola in the Willamette valley.

After multiple public hearings, HB2427, was amended into the 500-acre study bill. However, the one component that was left out of the bill, which Senator Gelser asked for, was an economic evaluation of specialty brassica seed production and canola production. In negotiations of the amended bill, the supporters of the ban refused to have an economic study as a part of OSU's work.

In 2015, the 500 acres of research came to an end. However, HB 3382 was passed to allow for the continuation of the 500 acres permitted under the authority of the Dept. of Ag. In addition, the canola opposition added to the bill that the OSU research would now be required to be peer reviewed from experts with knowledge of vegetable seed production as well as international reviews. The bill had a 2020 sunset date.

In the winter of 2018 ODA convened a Rules Advisory committee to see if a coexistence solution could be reached before the 2019 sunset. Many options were put on the table by canola growers including:

- reducing the acres of the protected district from where it is today – 3,690,145 acres to 1,961,392 acres and within that 880,805 acres would be completely banned from canola production.
- Development a public pinning map where all brassica crops (canola, turnip, etc.) would be pinned and controlled by ODA.
- There was even an offer make to list of canola seed varieties that were non-GMO and exclude GMO varieties – despite no scientific reasoning.



After multiple months of meeting, the Opposition walked away from the table and had HB3026, HB3219 and SB885 introduced in the 2019 session. Again, these bills were aimed at an outright ban or a forever 500-acre cap. The best canola growers could get out of that was another sunset provision.

So, here we are today. SB 789 is...

- NOT about agriculture coexistence but rather it is about agriculture control by a few specialty seed companies who don't have a market large enough to help farmers who need rotational crop options.
- It is NOT about "keeping this collaborative system going", there has never been anything collaborative about the process or in 3.6M acres in the Willamette Valley being controlled by a private non-profit group of seed companies.
- It is NOT about following the science and treating all brassica crops equitably if it were we would be talking about limiting turnip acres.

What is it really about? It is the ongoing practice of having ODA act as the legal strong arm for a few powerful seed companies' industries in order to manipulate and falsely inflate the specialty seed markets through legislation.

It is wrong and it pushes the boundaries of fair-trade practices and right to farm.

Thank you for your time.