

Submitter: J Sadowsky

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources

Measure: SB789

I want to tell you about the pest problems in broccoli and cabbage that result from nearby large canola fields. As soon as canola fields begin to dry down prior to harvest in mid-summer, flea beetles in huge numbers migrate from the canola fields to broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, arugula, Brussels sprouts, and kohlrabi (collectively, 'brassica' crops). There are 10's of thousands of flea beetles that appear suddenly in my field and are nearly impossible to control in an organic growing system. A few decades ago, flea beetles in brassicas were not an issue where I live because canola was not grown anywhere nearby. In recent years, canola was added to some farmers' crop rotations where I live and grow brassicas. Now, flea beetles are a huge problem and remain so each year for several months between mid-summer until around the time of the first frost. When these nasty beetles first arrive to find my Brassica crop, they present as a huge black swarm that blankets the crops with small highly mobile black specks. Walking through the field, they collect on my arms and other exposed skin and cause irritation. To manage these pest requires several sprays per week or else the brassica leaves get completely skeletonized and then will become too stunted to produce a crop worth harvesting.

This is now a yearly occurrence in my region, the Upper Midwest. For growers of brassicas in Oregon, the presence of canola grown on a larger scale nearby will cause a huge problem, leading to additional expense to manage previously unimportant pests such as flea beetles and significantly more harm to the environment and its inhabitants, such as humans, bees, and other beneficial creatures, due to increased pesticide sprays needed to manage the hitherto absent pests. Due to the serious problems canola brings about for growers of the botanically closely related high-value brassica food and seed crops, I support restriction of canola to less than 500 acres.

I lived in Corvallis in 2005 and enjoyed the bountiful harvests of brassicas grown in your region. Now, I buy Northwest-grown seed of brassicas, so still rely on that region's producers to provide seed stock necessary to produce my own crops here in the Upper Midwest. Thank you for hearing my "outsider-perspective" concerns about this matter. Sincerely, J Sadowsky