

Submitter: Michelle Burger  
On Behalf Of: Bethel Springs Farm  
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources  
Measure: SB789

Date: March 9, 2023  
To: Senate Natural Resources Committee  
From: Michelle Burger, Bethel Springs Farm LLC  
Re: Support for SB 789

Chair Golden, Vice Chair Girod, and Members of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources,

My name is Michelle Burger and I live in Rickreall, where I own and operate a small farm. I grow certified organic vegetables that I sell direct to customers at a farmers' market in Portland.

I am writing today in support of SB 789, which maintains current protections for the Willamette Valley's incredible brassica vegetable seed industry. The continued protection of the brassica vegetable seed industry is important to me and my business. The Willamette Valley has just the right climate to grow beautiful kales, cauliflowers, brussels sprouts and many other vegetables in the brassica family. Because of this, the seed production business has thrived here. It is so successful, that it provides that majority of the world's seed supply for these vegetables. Which means, of course, that it is supplying my farm with brassica vegetable seeds, too. It is a great advantage to me, to have seed that is produced in the same area (climate) where I am growing it out. Allowing more acreage, particularly unpinned acreage, for canola could permanently damage the brassica vegetable seed industry here.

I ask you to maintain the current protections in SB 789 not just for my own benefit, but also for the sake of all the farms that could suffer without it. The threat of genetically engineered canola cross-contamination with brassica crops is real, as is pest and disease spread. It would be very unfortunate for Oregon to sacrifice the established, profitable businesses producing specialty seeds for the sake of a lower value crop like canola. For the farmers who wish to grow canola, there are other similar crops can be grown instead, like safflower, sunflower, and flax, among others. And there are other regions in Oregon where it can be grown, where it will not endanger high value seed crops.

The passage of SB 789 provides an opportunity for Oregon to protect an agricultural sector that provides not only jobs and revenue, but the preservation of seed varieties, old and new, that could otherwise be lost forever. For these reasons, I implore you to

vote YES on SB 789, to enshrine the protection of the Willamette Valley as one of the vegetable seed capitals of the world and an economic powerhouse for our state.

Sincerely,

Michelle Burger  
Owner/Operator  
Bethel Springs Farm LLC