

Submitter: Melinda Stone

On Behalf
Of:

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and
Water

Measure: SB789

Please support SB 789. I am an avid food grower in my yard and in the community. I buy most of my plant food items seasonally and locally. In the summer I preserve lots of local/seasonally grown foods for my family. I moved here from Florida in 2008 to be closer to my organic or better than organic grown food and I'm actively involved with the food producers in Oregon to keep our food production secure from harm and that entails protecting our economy and the environment to the best of my ability. I am INVESTED here in the well-being of myself, my family and my community.

The small but wealthy and powerful seed oil industry is seeking to destroy my state's food crop (and food seed) industry. Let's not hand over the power to destroy our food industry to these entities.

The Brassica family can easily cross with each other (think broccoli, kale, cabbage, etc) a complex system of isolation distances, mapping, and coordinated management have been created to ensure that the seed you buy from Willamette Valley growers is true to type – ie red cabbage is red cabbage, savoy cabbage is savoy cabbage, purple top turnip is purple top turnip etc.. Canola or rapeseed crops threaten other seed crops. Oilseed alternatives to rapeseed are available. These oilseed crops provide many of the same benefits to farmers and could be grown more widely with far less danger to specialty seed crops. These include flax, safflower, sunflower, yellow mustard, and camelina.

A few politically connected farmers are pushing to grow rapeseed/canola in the Willamette protected zone. But we should not open Pandora's Box: once cross-contamination and pest spread happens, it cannot be reversed. The risk to our seed industry is just too great to gamble with. Once contamination happens, our seed cannot be sold on the global market, and we lose precious seed varieties that have been cultivated for generations to ensure food security.

Rapeseed growers have all of Oregon to grow this low-value crop. Specialty seed growers do not, and should not be asked to shoulder an unreasonable level of risk just to expand a few politically connected farmers' ambitions for a marginally profitable crop that can be grown almost anywhere.

Protecting the specialty seed industry has allowed it to thrive for decades in the Willamette. Upending these protections will create market uncertainty and hurt the industry even before rapeseed cross-contamination occurs. Driving seed farmers out

of business for a low-value crop creates economic instability and loss for no compelling reason.

It's about the economy. The specialty seed industry is a \$15M industry that is worth protecting. It provides \$9.2M in direct and indirect labor income, and meets market demand in dozens of countries around the world.

Please support and vote yes on SB 789. Thank you.