



May 10, 2023

RE: SB789; Make permanent certain restrictions on growing canola within Willamette Valley Protected District.

Dear Chair Helm and Committee Members:

Organically Grown Company, known as OGC, began 45 years ago as a non-profit grower's cooperative, selling fresh, organic produce and specialty crops to help small to mid-size farms expand their market access and to get healthy food to the people.

By 1980 OGC had created an agricultural marketing cooperative, purchased a cooler, and built its first loading dock in Eugene, Oregon. Along the way, OGC became an S-class corporation in 1999, and in 2008 an employee stock ownership program (ESOP) took effect. Then in 2018, OGC became proudly owned by the first-of-its-kind Sustainable Food and Agriculture Perpetual Purpose Trust. This Trust ownership model allows the company to remain independent and true to its mission to promote and inspire the growth of the organic agriculture movement.

Today, as a Trust-owned organization, OGC operates out of seven facilities in the Pacific Northwest and employs over 250 produce professionals. In 2022 OGC distributed over 125 million pounds of fresh organic produce to eaters, more than 11 million pounds of which was vegetables in the brassica family and accounted for \$18 million dollars in sales for us. It also equated to over \$20 million dollars in further sales for our retail and restaurant customers.

OGC is just one of many produce distributors in Oregon and represents only a fraction of the total amount of brassica vegetables distributed to Oregon's restaurants and retailers. And while our business is devoted to buying and selling certified organic produce, not all farmers, distributors, retailers and consumers are. The risk cross-contamination poses are to organic and conventional brassicas alike and are a major concern. Cross-pollination would inherently alter the genetic structure of the seed, resulting in crops, a.k.a. food, whose look and taste do not meet consumer's expectations. And when genetically engineered (GE) canola is grown an additional risk emerges as the introduction of GE DNA via cross-pollination would disqualify brassica seeds and the resulting crops as being eligible for organic certification.

The risk to our seed industry and the global market for fresh and processed brassica crops grown from Willamette Valley seed 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.

PASS SB 789

Protect our Brassicas:

- *Arugula
- *Bok Choy
- *Broccoli
- *Brussels Sprouts
- *Cabbage
- *Cauliflower
- *Chard
- *Collards
- *Horseradish
- *Kale
- *Kohlrabi
- *Mustard Greens
- *Rutabaga
- *Radish
- *Turnip
- *Water Cress





We are at a pivot point with protecting the Willamette for this key industry, and for the biodiverse seed varieties that growers all over the world depend on. We must extend the protections indefinitely and protect what's good. There is simply too much to lose. Here, as with so many public policies, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Organically Grown Company strongly urge you to vote YES on SB 789 to ensure the Willamette Valley keeps its reputation as one of the vegetable seed capitals of the world, a very special place for growing high-value seeds, and an economic powerhouse for our state.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Dill".

Mike Dill
Manager of Policy and Advocacy

