



May 15, 2023

House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources  
Oregon Legislature

Comments submitted electronically via [Oregon Legislative Information System \(oregonlegislature.gov\)](https://oregonlegislature.gov)

**RE: SB 789: Makes permanent certain restrictions on growing canola within Willamette Valley Protected District.**

Chairman Helm, Vice-Chair Hartman, and Members of the Committee,

The Pacific Northwest Canola Association appreciates the opportunity to testify remotely, and is submitting the following information in **opposition to SB 789**.

It is very difficult to see farmers in the Willamette Valley who have discovered a crop, canola, that is an answer to improving their entire crop rotation, yet for 10 (ten) years they have not been able to increase the acreage despite science-based evidence that canola CAN co-exist with other specialty crops (i.e. brassicas). Knowing the time, effort, *and* funding that was put in to five years of research by OSU scientists should mean something to everyone involved with agriculture in the Willamette Valley and all Oregonians. The peer-reviewed results of that research clearly stated that pests and diseases were not increased with canola production, and outcrossing was not an issue given proper isolation distance.

Farmers are inherently resilient, and their lives and lifestyles are dedicated to taking care of the soil to be able to pass their farm along to the next generation. Crop and chemical rotation is a major factor in maintaining and improving soil health, and canola has proven to be a key driver to achieve that. I encourage all of you to take the time to watch the video "[Building Soil Health with Canola Production](#)" and really listen to what the farmers, researchers, and USDA Natural Resources Conservationists have to say. While the footage was taken in eastern Washington due to the funding source (WA State Soil Health Committee), the experiences and information stated apply to all canola production regions around the U.S. and Canada. Soil health, crop rotation, and economic/market diversification all matter when it comes to a sustainable farm operation.

Lastly, I will reiterate the value of canola from the day it is planted to when it is harvested, sold, and processed into canola oil, and canola meal for livestock rations. It is a very unique attribute of the Willamette Valley and the PNW that that can all be achieved locally (see "[Canola in the Pacific Northwest: From Farm to Table](#)" for more information). Farmers, crop advisors, seed companies, livestock producers, *and* consumers all benefit from the production of canola, including in the Willamette Valley.

The PNWCA **opposes SB789**, and urges the Committee to oppose it as well.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen Sowers".

Karen Sowers, Executive Director

**Pacific Northwest Canola Association**

*Growing the canola industry in the Pacific Northwest through education, advocacy, and marketing*  
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