

Submitter: Michaela Hammer

On Behalf
Of:

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

Measure: HB4059

Good afternoon Chair Helm and members of the committee,
My name is Michaela Hammer and I live in Corvallis, and I want to start by thanking all of you and everyone in the rulemaking group for all the work you've put into this bill.

I operate Humming Bee Nursery, a small organic nursery just outside of Corvallis and, because I just moved my operations, still have crops in the ground in Marcola in Lane County as well. A small but significant part of my business is growing certified organic brassica seed on contract, and a large portion of the plant starts I sell are bred to be locally adapted to our very special region by the organic seed grower stakeholders in this conversation. I'm speaking here today to express my support for some portions of this bill included in amendment 7 and strong opposition to others included in amendment 8, with the hope that you'll move forward with the provisions in amendment 7.

I'm very supportive of the isolation distances included in this bill, as well as the system of pinning and tracking all brassica seed growers. I think the provisions surrounding GE canola in the -7 are also extremely important to make this bill actually protect specialty seed growers like me. I would also like to see in the bill a requirement for seed lot testing for any crop that could be GE, a cap on the acreage of all canola in the valley, and an avenue to pause or break the expansion of canola if contamination of other brassica crops is discovered. Without the GE cap, greater isolation distance for GE canola, and exception agreements, the -8 would make GE canola much more likely to make its way into organic brassica crops, which would essentially collapse our entire industry since organic seed can never contain GE material and cross contamination is very likely.

Removing the provisions restricting and monitoring GE canola is not worth the economic risk considering that organic brassica seed production nets hundreds of times more dollars per acre than canola; it's not worth the risk to our ability to breed locally adapted brassica varieties in a fast changing climate, especially considering that there are numerous other oil seed crops that growers could choose instead of canola; and it's not worth the risk to future generations here and around the country and world that will benefit from all the new varieties of broccolis, kales, mustards, and cabbages that our specialty seed breeders have yet to create.

Please continue to protect my business and our world class specialty seed industry as a whole by maintaining and expanding the restrictions on canola in the -7 of this bill. Thank you so much for your time.