

Submitter: Beth Gates

On Behalf  
Of:

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

Measure: HB4059

Chair Helm, Vice Chairs Owens and Hartman, and members of the committee:

My name is Beth Gates and I am a home gardener and sustainable food system advocate in Portland. Specialty Brassica seed growing in the Willamette Valley is a vital part of our thriving small farm ecosystem here in Oregon. We are so lucky to be able to produce seeds in our region that produce millions of pounds of food the world over. It is our duty to protect the ability of our farmers to grow vegetable seeds, feeding their families through viable farm businesses, and the world through the food the seeds produce.

I am writing to you to express support for HB 4059-7. I strongly oppose HB 4059-8.

I care about seed farming in the Willamette Valley Protected District because I am both a sustainable food system advocate and an avid home gardener. Through my work as a sustainable food system advocate I understand the context for how critically important the Willamette Valley Specialty Seed Industry is not only for Oregon's food system, but also for the global food system. Canola is a crop that poses an irreversible threat to the brassica seed industry, and the impacts of compromising the WVPD would be experienced globally. Also, as a home gardener I rely on buying brassica seeds, these crops grow especially well in our climate and we enjoy eating broccoli, cabbage, kale, collards, and cauliflower grown in our own garden. Ultimately food options for millions of people would be greatly diminished if the seed production of the brassica seed farmers in the WVPD is compromised due to unregulated canola farming.

I am grateful for the work of the committee, the named isolation districts and the limitation of GE canola in the WVPD. We urge you to remember what Oregon's seed growers bring to the table through the farming they enable, the rural economies their farms participate in, the crucial knowledge they hold and the need for food security through seed security. This proposal already represents a huge compromise for the seed growers and we cannot afford to lose any more ground. When you consider HB 4059, please listen to the guidance of specialty seed growers and support the strongest possible option for Oregon.

Sincerely,

Beth Gates