



Representative Bobby Levy

Serving Umatilla, Union & Wallowa Counties

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

I am Representative Bobby Levy I represent House District 58 which consists of most of Umatilla County, and all of Union County and Wallowa County. As many of you are aware, agriculture is the cornerstone of my district as well as the cornerstone of the districts within the Willamette Valley and those who benefit from the agriculture of the Willamette Valley which extends to every district of Oregon.

HB 4059, along with its -1 and -9 amendments, presents an alarming assault on local farmers, carrying grave repercussions for farmers in the Willamette Valley Protected District. This bill disregards the science, research and the will of the voters.

The -1 or -9 amendment imposes a drastic restriction on canola growth, limiting it to a mere 500 acres in total, within the expansive 3.69 million-acre protected district of the Willamette Valley. This constitutes a mere 0.013% of the district, a disproportionately restrictive measure.

Back in 1993, our legislature recognized the fundamental Right to Farm, a pivotal moment where we acknowledged that Oregon's farmers possess the autonomy to utilize their land as they see fit. Yet, the -1 and -9 amendment disregards this fundamental right, sending a distressing message to our farmers in this specialized district that their cherished rights hold no significance to our legislature. It prioritizes the interests of a select few large-scale farmers over the multitude of smaller farmers within the district.

Let us not forget, this bill's impact is not limited to a singular region or crop. By setting such a precedent, it opens the door to future attacks on farmers statewide, regardless of their geographic location or the crops they cultivate. Passing this bill with either the -1 or -9 amendments constitutes an affront to the very essence of farming rights we enshrined in 1993, reaffirmed in 1995, and again in 2001.

I implore my colleagues to empathize with our farmers and recognize that this bill's ramifications extend far beyond the immediate issue at hand. It undermines the rights of all Oregon farmers to farm as they see fit. Our decisions today set a precedent for the future. By upholding our farmers' rights, we send a powerful message that our legislature stands unwavering in defense of these rights. I urge you to join me in voting no on the -9 amendment, standing firmly with the lifeblood of our state – our farmers.

Bobby Levy