

Submitter: Chris Roehm

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire

Measure: HB4059

Chair Golden, Vice Chair Girod and members of the committee:

My name is Chris Roehm and I am writing in support of HB 4059-A. I am a farmer in Forest Grove, OR. The Willamette Valley Specialty Brassica seed industry is vital to the agricultural landscape of Oregon and we are so lucky to have the land, expertise and conditions to support this unique industry. We should protect these farmers' ability to grow the seeds that produce millions of pounds of food across the world. Because a reasonable agreement could not be reached after the work group process, extending the current regulations is the only viable option. This topic means so much to me because:

My wife and I have been growing certified organic vegetables and selling them at farmers markets for the past 20 years. This is our sole source of income and our way of contributing to society. We purchase as much of our inputs and services from local suppliers – and this includes our vegetable seeds. Vegetable seed production in the Willamette Valley is a pretty unique industry – unlike the production of canola seed for oil, which can and is done in many, many places throughout the world.

We know that HB 4059-A is not the end of the road and we will have to find a more permanent solution in the next few years. I urge legislators to listen to the specialty seed growers in this process. Just because they are not the biggest, most industrialized farms does not mean that they have any less value in the system. Please respect their knowledge of the plant biology, industry standards and best practices that have made this a thriving industry here in our state. In particular, we need future policy to address the need for a public pinning map, seed lot testing for commodity crops, isolation distances, limitations on crop varieties that threaten organic production, and accountability and shared risk for all parties, not just small seed growers.

Thank you,
Chris Roehm
Square Peg Farm, Inc
Forest Grove, OR