

15 March 2017

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing to express my support for, and to appeal to all of you to support, HB 2469. It scares me to have Genetically Engineered (GE) crops loose in our environment. As a biologist, I am acutely aware of the amazing ability of flowering plants, including wind-pollinated ones, to distribute their pollen far and wide, and thereby reproduce and mix their genes over vast areas. The implication for GE plants is that GE pollen can very easily drift beyond the fences and boundaries of a plot and contaminate other neighboring non-GE crops. Once contamination has happened, there are a lot of unintended consequences, all of them bad.

- First, the neighboring farmer can be held liable for unauthorized possession of patented GE genes, with unpleasantly large fines.
- If neighboring farmers grow organic crops, they can lose their organic certification, which can have huge impacts on their ability to make a profit.
- Such a contamination event can pit neighboring farmers against one another, which is detrimental and divisive for a rural community.

Many of the most common GE crops operate on the basis of GE resistance of crop species to pesticides, allowing growers to engage in an escalating pesticide war against insect and plant pests, as the targets develop genetic resistance to the biocides, forcing the growers to switch to new biocides, to which the targets eventually develop resistance. Meanwhile, those farm fields and often neighboring ones also, due to wind drift, are exposed to very unhealthy levels of all sorts of poisons.

And then there are the failed GE experiments, where a GE species proves to be aggressive and invades broad geographic areas, due to various modes of seed dispersal. An example of this is the GE creeping bentgrass, which is "creeping" across large areas in eastern OR and causing havoc with native plant communities.

I and my neighbors in Josephine County took appropriate action a few years ago to address these threats by passing a GE prohibition ballot measure. Unfortunately, the Legislature took away our rights to control our local destiny and protect ourselves and our agricultural land by passing a bill that over-rode the will of the Josephine County voters. HB 2469 would protect the Oregon farm and natural communities from these and other threats caused by GE crops. Please do all you can to support and insure passage of this worthy bill.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

William Gray
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