

March 16, 2017

Good morning my name is Elise Higley, I have a 113 acre farm in Jackson County, Oregon and am the Executive Director of Our Family Farms Coalition. I represent thousands across Oregon, who like me are concerned about our traditional seeds supply and protecting farmers against the threats of genetically engineered (GE) crops.

I'm here to support HB2739

**The risk that GE crops will contaminate traditional crops is very real.** If my corn seed crop that I grow gets contaminated because a farmer down the road starts growing genetically engineered corn, under federal patent law, I wouldn't be able to sell or save my seed. It wouldn't be a sound business decision to simply ignore federal patent law and hope Monsanto does not file suit against me. But legal issues aside, my buyers – like many buyers around the world simply will not buy my crop if it is contaminated. This is not about loss of my organic certification, it's about the economic loss in the sale of the seed that would have been sold, the loss of my farm's reputation for future contracts, the loss of a year or even two it took to grow out a crop for the seed harvest, the loss of actual seed supply that our farm or other farmers have been working for generations to preserve, not to mention putting myself and our family at legal risk. It doesn't make fiscal sense to grow a crop if you find out there is the likelihood of GE contamination. The only rational decision is to remove a crop and cut your losses. This is the current state of affair in farming today; the GE crop ends up winning by default and every year the traditional farming community ends up with less and less seed varieties to choose from. Because it's risky business to plant crops that are at risk of GE contamination, less farmers are growing them resulting in higher prices and in turn a higher cost for non GMO food.

This bill is not pitting farmer to farmer but holding the patent holder responsible. I believe that ownership of damage costs does belong to the patent holder. If it's not causing harm than it shouldn't matter. If it is causing harm and we are not holding the patent holder for responsible why not?

No doubt we will hear heated arguments today on the pros and cons of GE production. The good news is you can remind yourself that this is not what

we are meeting about today. We are just asking is it reasonable for the patent holder to be responsible for a product that economically harms others. I think so.

**Thank you for considering** my comments. I hope you will join me in supporting HB2739

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