

June 30, 2005

The Honorable Dean Florez
California Senate
State Capitol, Room 5061
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Senator:

SB 1056 - OPPOSE

The California Native Plant Society, and its 10,000 members including scientists and laypeople supporting conservation of California's native plants, oppose SB 1056, which would preclude local communities taking steps to protect their local economies and environments from potentially destructive plant cultivation.

Your bill makes the California Seed Law superior to any other regulation or ordinance that may be enacted by a local government regarding cultivation of seeds within its jurisdiction. Several communities have adopted restrictions on the cultivation of certain seeds because of known and, in many cases, unknown unintended consequences from raising engineered seeds/plants.

The potential for "gene flow" or the successful incorporation of genes from one plant population into another has long been recognized as a potential problem in maintaining healthy and viable crop varieties and native plant communities. Therefore, agricultural industries such as the California rice industry have gone to great lengths to protect the integrity of specific rice varieties critical to the economic stability of their industry.

Similar cross-pollination from cultivated seeds and plants to native wild plants is also a common occurrence. Weedy plants are most susceptible to gene flow due to an abundance of pollen. Communities and landowners across the State are well aware of the public and economic costs involved in controlling invasive species. Science has demonstrated that gene flow rates vary depending the crop, wild species, and local environmental conditions. Therefore, it is critical that local communities retain the ability to analyze their local circumstances to protect local economies and natural areas that provide significant value to their citizens.

For these reasons we oppose SB 1056.

Sincerely,

Vern Goehring
Legislative Advocate

cc: Hon. Barbara Matthews
Chair, Assembly Committee on Agriculture