

## Civil Disobedience against AB2470, The California Seed Law

### Declaration of Commitment to obey higher laws of the Earth, biodiversity, Democracy and human rights

- As earth Citizens we have a duty to protect biodiversity and the integrity and diversity of seed.
- As citizens we have the human right to healthy, safe, diverse seeds to grow healthy, safe and diverse foods.
- As farmers and gardeners, we have the right to save, exchange, evolve the seeds of open pollinated varieties we have received from our ancestors to ensure food and nutritional security for our families and communities .

**To address the multiple crises of health, malnutrition and climate change, we have a moral duty to conserve, use, exchange and evolve the diversity of open pollinated seeds. From this duty, flows the right of farmers and gardeners to save and exchange open pollinated/open source seeds freely.**

Over the last half century, industrial agriculture has manipulated the seed to adapt it to chemicals, and genetically modified seed to be resistant to Round Up. While the California EPA has recently issued a notice to label Glyphosate (the key ingredient in Monsanto's Roundup) as a Carcinogen, the California Seed Law, in effect, forces GMOs - and Glyphosate - on the citizens of California, by closing the space for saving, growing, multiplying and exchanging non GMO seeds, and their rich diversity.

This is a seed emergency and we will not stand by and watch the establishment of seed slavery. The agrochemical industry, through the establishment of seed cartels and monopolies over seed, and the forced loss of diversity, is robbing us and our future generations of our seeds. In only the last 80 years, we have lost 93% of our seed diversity.

Industrially bred seeds have increased the use of toxic chemicals in agriculture, leading to the emergence of new diseases and the extinction of plant and animal species. Industrial breeding has also produced nutritionally empty commodities full of toxins, deepening the crisis of malnutrition rather than solving it. Industrial agriculture has contributed frighteningly to climate change, being responsible for 40% of Green House Gas emissions.

At a time when humanity's survival depends on diversity and climate resilience in agriculture through evolutionary breeding and organic farming, the California Seed Law is increasing climate vulnerability by exclusively promoting industrial seeds through industry-funded research.

Counties, local, regional and national governments must make laws that enhance humanity's ability to respond to the crisis through diversity and resilience. California State AB2470 threatens to undermine the law of the seed, of biodiversity, sustainability and laws of economic justice and human rights. The law falsely declares that corporations are persons . It subverts the powers of cities and counties, undermining the basic tenets of democracy. Our duty to higher law compels us to declare our non co-operation with the California Seed Law (AB2470).

**Each time an unjust system imposed unjust laws, civil disobedience was used to reclaim freedom.**

In the spirit of Thoreau, Gandhi's Satyagraha and Martin Luther King, we call for a civil disobedience against unjust seed laws and declare that we will not recognize any law that makes seed the private property of corporations, bolsters a destructive and exploitative system of agriculture, and criminalizes the true vibrant and healthy alternatives in times of crisis. To obey higher laws of the earth and human rights, we declare non co-operation and civil disobedience against this unjust seed law.

**We will continue to save, exchange, grow, our time tested seeds of diversity, freedom and hope.**

**No law will come between us and our seeds. Seed freedom is our birth right.**

**Assembly Bill No. 2470**

CHAPTER 294

An act to amend Sections 52256.5, 52288, 52332, and 52452 of, and to add Section 52334 to, the Food and Agricultural Code, relating to seed.

**AB 2470, Salas. California Seed Law.**

*Existing law, the California Seed Law, regulates seed sold in California, and requires each container of agricultural seed that is for sale or sold within this state for sowing purposes to be labeled, as specified, unless the sale is an occasional sale of seed grain by the producer of the seed grain to his neighbor for use by the purchaser within the county of production. Existing law defines "person" for purposes of the California Seed Law to mean an individual, partnership, trust association, cooperative association, or any other business unit or organization.*

*This bill would clarify that definition of "person" to include corporations. The bill would also clarify the term "neighbor" for purposes of the labeling requirements specified above to mean a person who lives in close proximity, not to exceed 3 miles, to another. The bill would revise a statement of legislative intent to include ensuring that the amount of seed represented on a tag or label is properly identified.*

*Existing law authorizes the Secretary of Food and Agriculture, by regulation, to adopt a list of plants and crops that the secretary finds are or may be grown in this state from agricultural or vegetable seed.*

*This bill would instead authorize the secretary, by regulation, to adopt a list of plants and crops that the secretary finds are or may be grown in this state. The bill would also prohibit a city, county, or district, including a charter city or county, from adopting or enforcing an ordinance on or after*

January 1, 2015, that regulates plants, crops, or seeds without the consent of the secretary. The bill would make other nonsubstantive changes.

- **Corporations are Not Persons**

All democratic societies recognize corporations as legal entities and not persons. Yet the California law AB2470 is imposing corporate rule through corporate personhood.

*“52256.5. “Person” also means any individual, partnership, corporation, trust association, cooperative association, or any other business unit or organization. “*

- **Saving and Exchanging Seeds is a Fundamental Right and Duty.**

The bill violates the basic right and duty to exchange seeds by prohibiting farmers from exchanging seeds with people living more than 3 miles away, unless they adhere to the same testing and labelling standards as that of large corporations.

*“The bill would also clarify the term “neighbor” for purposes of the labeling requirements specified above to mean a person who lives in close proximity, not to exceed 3 miles, to another. “*

**Decentralized Democracy is vital to the defense of human rights and freedoms –**

Californians, Americans, Citizens of the world are rising to reclaim life, itself, from the clutches of corporate patents, and local, regional governments and counties, are deepening democracy by deepening decentralization - making their own decisions and writing their own laws at local levels. The California Seed Law violates the democratic rights by prohibiting local governments and counties from making their own laws related to plants, crops or seeds.

*52334. Notwithstanding any other law, on and after January 1, 2015, a city, county, or district, including a charter city or county, shall not adopt or enforce an ordinance that regulates plants, crops, or seeds without the consent of the secretary. An ordinance enacted before January 1, 2015, shall be considered part of the comprehensive program of the department and shall be enforceable.*

- **The Future of Food and Nutrition Security rests on biodiversity and climate resilience through participatory and evolutionary breeding.**

Decades of industrial breeding and genetic engineering has not improved nutrition but in fact degraded the quality of our food. It has increased the toxic burden on our farms and food. It has contributed more greenhouse gases and contributed to climate change. To address the crisis of malnutrition and climate crisis we need to reclaim the seed diversity that was bred for health, nourishment and climate resilience and build our food and nutritional security through participatory and evolutionary breeding with and by farmers, gardeners and public institutions.

With this recognition states have an obligation to strengthen research of public institutions

for the larger public good. Instead the California Seed Law is a recipe for deepening corporate control over research shutting out the alternatives that will bring us food security and climate resilience.

**52288.**

***to enable the seed industry, with the aid of the state, to ensure that seed purchased by the consumer-buyer is properly identified and of the quality and amount represented on the tag or label. The Legislature further declares that the success of agriculture and the seed industry in this state depends upon the continued commitment to industry-funded research in order to improve the quality and variety of seed available to the consumer-buyer.***