

From:
To: [Environment and Public Affairs Committee](#)
Subject: Submission on Farmer Protection
Date: Thursday, 15 February 2018 10:39:47 PM

Copy of submission being mailed tomorrow from Margaret River which may be a few days late arriving.

Tia

Submission addressed to the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs, West Australian Parliament.

Submission topic: Inquiry into mechanisms for compensation for economic loss to farmers in Western Australia caused by contamination by genetically modified material.

Submission from Tia Cordwell.

I strongly support a compensation system for economic loss for farmers whose land or crops have been contaminated by genetically modified (GM) material.

The following Principles should underlie “Farmer Protection Legislation”:

A no-fault system.

Landholders should be compensated quickly and without big costs. An insurance scheme is one method but insurance companies would resist as at present they exclude cover for GM contamination as the risks are so uncertain. It would be hard to compel the insurance industry, through legislation, to insure the risk. They would fight paying out for claims, or policies would be so expensive it would create its own problems. An insurance scheme would probably require the aggrieved party to identify the GM farmers at fault which could be difficult and divisive in small communities. If multiple GM farmers are growing GM crops in the area, where contamination came from would be difficult to decide.

A ‘Direct Billing’ Model would present huge problems as the biotech industry would fight every claim with a battery of lawyers.

The scheme would also require :

independent management

automatic compensation for proven economic loss and harm,
for GM contamination in WA

to be funded by a levy on GM seed sales

the amount of the levy would need to be adjustable in
response to greater or less demand on the Fund's resources - an
incentive to minimise GM contamination

The state is in a difficult situation. There needs to be a moratorium on
growing of GM until a scheme is in place to protect non GM farmers.

If our state is anything like other parts of the world where GM is
grown, there will already be considerable contamination which has
yet to become evident.

The system also needs to be able to cover this.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission.

Tia Cordwell