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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Local Food System to be Decided by the People**

**Benton County Local Food System Initiative Ballot Title Cleared for Signature Gathering**

**April 4, 2014**

**BENTON COUNTY, OREGON** – Today Judge Donohue of the Benton County Circuit Court ruled on the wording of the caption, ballot title, and summary for the Local Food System Ordinance of Benton County. This decision allows the petition to be officially certified for circulation by the County Clerk. The petitioners, BC Community Rights Campaign expect to be out gathering signatures from Benton County registered voters by the end of April to qualify a measure for the November 2014 ballot.

The Local Food System Ordinance of Benton County seeks to protect residents' right to local farm and food systems, seed heritage and the rights of natural communities by prohibiting unsustainable corporate practices – like GMO's and seed patents – from violating those rights within Benton County.

“I've said it often over the last 40 years. Our local food system is priceless and if we the people don't protect it who will?” says Harry MacCormack, a chief petitioner of the BC Community Rights Campaign.

“Fundamentally what we are talking about here is our right to self-government, which means corporate privilege and state preemption have to take a back seat as they attempt to undermine our rights to a healthy and economically vibrant local food system and clean environment.”

The BC Community Rights Campaign is now recruiting volunteers across Oregon. The Petition needs 2,171 valid signatures to be submitted to the County Clerk no later than August 6<sup>th</sup> to qualify for the November 2014 ballot. To volunteer send an email to [volunteer@BentonCCRC.org](mailto:volunteer@BentonCCRC.org) or call Lev at 541 908-9422

The fight for who decides about how food is grown here in Oregon is being waged in other counties as well. A very similar local food system initiative is moving towards circulation in Lane County, in addition to straight GMO bans in Jackson and Josephine County to be voted on in May, and a Freedom from Pesticides Bill of Rights initiative in Josephine County – prohibiting certain pesticide use in corporate forestry and agriculture – for the November ballot. All of these efforts make it clear that the democratic rights of local communities to determine their own well being must trump corporate interests and the state when their aim is to undermine those rights.