



NATIONAL HEALTH FREEDOM ACTION

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Urgent Action Needed in 14 States to Support GMO-Labeling!

Find Your State and Take Action Now! Fifty-three bills in Twenty-two states have been introduced demanding labeling of food containing Genetically Modified Organisms. This alert addresses 14 of the states with broad GMO labeling bills. Together we can do this!

There is an urgent need for laws requiring the labeling of foods containing or produced with genetically modified organisms. The FDA has held that genetically engineered (GE) foods do not need to be labeled because they are "substantially equivalent" to non-GE foods. But GE is completely different from traditional breeding and it is now possible for plants to be engineered with genes taken from bacteria, viruses, insects, animals or even humans. And warnings based on current research indicate that the ingestion of GMO foods can pose serious and significant health risks. Manufacturers and distributors are avoiding responsible labeling of their GMO products. Some consumer-friendly manufacturers and independent organizations help consumers by labeling products without GMOs as "GMO-Free" in order to support consumer informed choice, and alleviate the void in information.

Connecticut H.B. 6519
Hawaii S.B. 468, 934, & 1329
Iowa SF 194 / HF 463
Illinois SB 1666 / HB 3085
Indiana H.B. 1196
Massachusetts HB 808, 1936, 2037 & 2093
Maine House Paper 490
Minnesota Senate File 821/ House File 850
New York AB 3525 & 5412 / S.B. 3835
Oregon HB 2175 & 2532
Tennessee SB 894 / HB 1168
Vermont SB 89 / HB 112
Washington SB 5073
West Virginia HB 2153

All people deserve to have the necessary tools to make an informed decision when they purchase food. As Thomas Jefferson once said, "An educated citizenry is a vital requisite for our survival as a free people."

Recent polls indicate that the overwhelming majority of Americans think Genetically Engineered foods should be labeled. Genetic Engineering (GE) or Genetic Modification (GM) is a laboratory process that includes taking genes from one species and inserting them into another in an attempt to obtain a desired trait or characteristic. The first GE food crop was introduced in 1994 and, since then, the introduction of new GE crops has accelerated at an alarming rate.

The urgency for the right to know of GMO labeling stems from broad concerns. Health concerns exist regarding human consumption of GMOs, just one example being that in 2009, the American Academy of Environmental Medicine (AAEM) stated that, "Several animal studies indicate serious health risks associated with genetically modified (GM) food," including infertility, immune problems, accelerated aging, faulty insulin regulation, and changes in major organs and the gastrointestinal system. The AAEM has asked physicians to advise all patients to avoid GM foods. In addition there is absolutely no proof that long-term consumption of GMOs is safe for human long term health.

Economic concerns exist regarding the millions of U.S. acres planted with GMO crops because manufacturers of GE foods made false promises about feeding the world and helping farmers grow more with less with no downsides. But economic disaster and hardship for farmers is upon us because for example seed company promises that farmers could plant Bt crops and not have to spray pesticides failed because corn rootworms have begun to develop resistance, creating a dangerous ecological environment and requiring farming solutions back to use of new pesticides.

In addition, 26 years of research and 19 years of commercialization reveal that GE has failed to significantly increase U.S. crop yields. The actual accomplishments of GE have been to make farmers buy more pesticides and to drive up the price of patented seeds.

Current FDA policy is that genetically engineered foods do not need to be labeled, arguing that genetically engineered foods are "substantially equivalent" to non-GE foods. But GE is completely different from traditional breeding and it is now possible for plants to be engineered with genes taken from bacteria, viruses, insects, animals or even humans. For example, genetically engineered Bt corn, planted on millions of acres across the U.S. and Canada, is corn that has been gene-spliced with bacterial DNA that produces Bt insecticide in every cell of the plant.

The labeling of foods containing genetically modified organisms by food processors supports the ideal upon which the free market rests: TRANSPARENCY. The lack of labeling of the presence of genetically modified organisms in our food that we eat is nothing more than a market competition tool, and an attempt to withhold significant truthful information from consumers that would certainly impact their purchasing decisions.

The following are excerpts of currently introduced bills of rational for urgent need for labeling of GMO's from three states:

Massachusetts:

“...Government scientists have stated that the artificial insertion of DNA into plants, a technique unique to genetic engineering, can cause a variety of significant problems with plant foods. Such genetic engineering can increase the levels of known toxicants in foods and introduce new toxicants and health concerns...

Genetic engineering of plants and animals often causes unintended consequences. Manipulating genes and inserting them into organisms is an imprecise process. The results are not always predictable or controllable, and they can lead to adverse health or environmental consequences...

(f) Fifty countries—including the European Union member states, Japan and other key U.S. trading partners—have laws mandating disclosure of genetically engineered foods. No international agreements prohibit the mandatory identification of foods produced through genetic engineering. ...

(g) Without disclosure, consumers of genetically engineered food can unknowingly violate their own dietary and religious restrictions...

The purpose of this measure is to create and enforce the fundamental right of the people of Massachusetts to be fully informed about whether the food they purchase and eat is genetically engineered and not misbranded as natural so that they can choose for themselves whether to purchase and eat such foods... ”

Vermont:

*“... (4) Vermont and other states do have the authority to regulate the
9 labeling of genetically engineered foods as evidenced by the fact that:
10 (A) the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit held in National
11 Electric Manufacturers Assn. v. Sorrell, 272 F.3d 104 (2d Cir. 2001), that
12 states are free to compel the disclosure of factual commercial speech as long as
13 the means employed by the state are rationally related to the state's legitimate*

14 interest; and

15 (B) the decision of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit
16 in *International Dairy Foods Ass'n v. Amestoy*, 92 F.3d 67 (2d Cir. 1996), is
17 expressly limited to cases in which a state disclosure requirement is supported
18 by no interest other than gratification of consumer curiosity....

(5) Genetically engineered foods have an effect 1 on human health, animal
2 health, agriculture, and the environment, and, consequently, the citizens of
3 Vermont have a legitimate interest in requiring food produced from genetic
4 engineering to be labeled as such, as evidenced by the fact that:

5 (A) Independent studies in laboratory animals indicate that the
6 ingestion of genetically engineered foods may lead to health problems such as
7 gastrointestinal damage, liver and kidney damage, reproductive problems,
8 immune system interference, and allergic responses.

9 (B) Genetically engineered crops that include pesticides may
10 adversely affect populations of nontarget insects, and may contribute to genetic
11 homogeneity, loss of biodiversity, and increased vulnerability of crops to pests
12 or diseases....

(D) Instead of specifically regulating the safety and labeling of food
7 produced from genetic engineering, the FDA regulates genetically engineered
8 foods in the same way it regulates foods developed by traditional plant
9 breeding, but, according to Dr. James Maryanski, FDA biotechnology
10 coordinator (1985–2008), the decision to regulate genetically engineered food
11 in this manner was a political decision not based in science....”

West Virginia:

“... (7) Mandatory labeling provides a critical scientific method necessary for the
continual post market surveillance to study long- term health impacts and enforcement of
food safety laws preventing adulterated foods from reaching consumers.

(8) Many of the United States' key trading partners, including countries in the European
Union, Japan, and the People's Republic of China, have established, or are in the process
of implementing, mandatory labeling requirements for genetically engineered food.

(9) Adoption and implementation of mandatory labeling requirements for genetically
engineered food produced in this state would facilitate international trade by allowing
West Virginia farmers and companies to export and appropriately market their products,
both genetically engineered and nongenetically engineered, to foreign customers....”