



**In Support of HB 5117, An Act Concerning Genetically-Engineered Foods  
Submitted to the Connecticut General Assembly Environment Committee**

By: Marina Marchese on behalf of Red Bee Honey, Weston, CT

February 22, 2012

To Senator Meyer, Representative Roy, and Members of the Environment Committee:

My name is Marina Marchese. I am the President of Red Bee Honey, and have been a beekeeper for twelve years. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 5117.

As the Environment Committee considers HB 5117 and the right of Connecticut residents to know the contents of the foods they purchase and consume, Red Bee Honey encourages the Committee to examine the treatment of genetically modified agricultural products in the European Union, particularly as it relates to honey and honey-based products. In the European Union, the pollen found in honey is considered an agricultural ingredient requiring GMO labeling.<sup>1</sup> As a purveyor of single floral source honeys, Red Bee Honey supports labeling and regulation of GMO food products in order to prevent contamination of honey and honey-based products.

Honeybees will travel within a radius of about four miles to gather nectar from various floral sources needed to produce honey. If a beekeeper places hives near fields containing GMO products, traces of those products may contaminate the honey, resulting in a product anathema to what consumers want and expect. Recently the European Court of Justice, Europe's highest court, held that honey containing traces of genetically modified material is a food produced from modified plants. As a result, beekeepers have a basis for a claim for damages against a farmer if genetically modified pollen enters their honey and results in pecuniary losses.<sup>2</sup>

Domestically, consumers have the same right to know whether their food contains traces of GMO products. The "zero-tolerance" policy for traces of GMO products exhibited by the European Court of Justice provides a model for legislation in the United States. As the possible health risks of GMO product consumption are still widely unknown, Red Bee Honey supports HB 5117. The proposed legislation will elucidate the contents of food products and empower consumers to decide their food choices for themselves, fully informed of the contents of those food products.

Sincerely,

Marina Marchese

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<sup>1</sup> Press Release No 79/11, Court of Justice of the European Union, Luxembourg, 6 September 2011, Judgment in Case C-442/09, Karl Heinz Bablok and Others v. Freistaat Bayern

<sup>2</sup> Bablok et al. v. Bayern, European Court of Justice, Case C-442/09 (2011).