



**TESTIMONY TO THE CGA PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
LABELLING OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOOD (HB 6519)**

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Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson, distinguished members of the CGA Public Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today.

My name is Louis Burch, program coordinator for Citizens Campaign for the Environment (CCE). CCE is an 80,000 member non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization that works to protect public health and the natural environment. CCE is testifying today in support of HB 6519.

CCE strongly supports this committee's efforts to require labeling of genetically modified (GM) foods in the State of Connecticut. Full disclosure of food ingredients is critical to a nutritious diet and a healthy lifestyle, and we see more consumers today choosing organic, local and GMO free foods than ever before. Many brands today can even mislead consumers by labeling foods as "all natural," while containing high fructose corn syrup and other GM ingredients. People have a right to know what is in the food they eat, and conspicuous labeling of food items containing GMO's is an important first step towards helping CT residents make informed decisions about what they are feeding their families.

Though more research is needed, there is evidence that GM foods may be linked to adverse health effects in human beings, especially for at-risk individuals. Human health concerns include antibiotic resistance, problems associated with food allergies, and persistent exposure to chemical pesticides. Despite this, The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) does not test for safety on GM foods, largely because agricultural interests have successfully argued that the technology used to genetically modify food resources is no different from traditional crop breeding techniques and natural selection.

In reality, very little is known about the full extent of the impacts of modifying genetics, as science has shown that a single gene can actually control multiple traits in plants and animals. This is why the American Academy of Environmental Medicine has called for a moratorium on genetically modified (GM) food, pending the results of extensive independent safety testing, as well as thorough labeling of GM foods.

Connecticut would certainly not be the first state to require labeling of food made with GM ingredients. There is a worldwide movement of nations that require GMO labeling, including the European Union, China, Japan, Russia, Australia and several others. ***Citizens Campaign for the Environment strongly supports requiring thorough labeling of genetically modified foods bought and sold in Connecticut.*** Full and honest disclosure of GM foods will help promote transparency of production, hold manufacturers accountable to their consumers, and allow CT families to make better decisions about what they put on their dinner tables.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today, CCE looks forward to working with you on this important issue.

Respectfully submitted,

Louis W. Burch
Program Coordinator