

Haeseler HB 6519

Dear Sirs,

My name is Eric Haeseler. I live at 6 Oxford Drive, Suffield CT and I'm an active voter. In this testimony I speak as an active member of the Connecticut Sierra Club and more importantly as a consumer who demands the right to make informed decisions on my food purchases.

When they first introduced genetically engineered (GE) foods, creators of these foods promised increased yields, drought tolerance, enhanced nutrition, and other benefits.

Instead of realizing these benefits we consumers find ourselves consuming foods grown with historically unheard of levels of herbicides contaminating the soil and creating new herbicide resistant weeds.

In addition to the environmental risks associated with GE crops, such as the creation of herbicide resistant "superweeds", we are also faced with human health consequences. Since these foods are developed with genes from other species, they create potential unanticipated allergic reactions in those who are sensitive. In addition, in one study, scientists found that inert ingredients in the herbicide amplified the toxic effect on human cells—even at concentrations much more diluted than those used on farms and lawns. One specific inert ingredient, POEA, was more deadly to human embryonic, placental and umbilical cord cells than the herbicide itself – a finding the researchers called “astonishing.” “Moreover, the proprietary mixtures available on the market could cause cell damage and even death [at the] residual levels” found on herbicide-treated crops, such as soybeans, alfalfa and corn, or lawns and gardens. The research team suspects that this popular herbicide might cause pregnancy problems by interfering with hormone production, possibly leading to abnormal fetal development, low birth weights or miscarriages. Health consequences definitely need more study.

The companies that created these GE crops loudly proclaim that there aren't any independent studies supporting claims of negative effects from their products. The main reason the independent studies don't exist is the refusal, of the companies holding the patents on the seeds, to release them for research purposes.

Lack of cooperation from the industry and concerns of many scientists around the world have led over 60 countries to either ban GE crops or require their mandatory labeling.

Connecticut consumers have a right to know what's in their food, especially concerning products for which health and environmental concerns have been raised, so they can make informed decisions about buying food for their families.

Mandatory labeling will allow those consumers with specific allergies or intolerances to identify and steer clear of food products that cause them problems.

In summary, I urge your support for HB 6519- AN ACT CONCERNING THE LABELING OF GENETICALLY ENGINEERED FOOD

Thank you,

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