



Connecticut Retail Merchants Association
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Timothy G. Phelan
President

Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson, Senator Welch, Representative Srinivasan and members of the Public Health Committee,

My name is Tim Phelan and I am the President of the Ct Retail Merchants Association. CRMA is statewide trade association representing retailers throughout Connecticut. Our membership includes some of the world's largest retailers as well as the state's main street merchants. I am here before you today to testify in opposition to Raised Bill 6519, "An Act Concerning the Labeling of Genetically Engineered Food".

CRMA has a very short and simple message as it relates to this bill: We are concerned that the issue of placing a Ct specific label of food products would place our members on an Island with respect to the rest of the county and therefore place us as at a competitive disadvantage. Our members would be burdened by having to serve as the watchdog on every label on every product from every manufacturer that is shipped into our stores. Ct Retailers would be the ONLY ones in the Country faced with this new requirement as Retailers from surrounding states and the rest of the country would continue to comply with FDA and USDA standards. This new labeling requirement has nothing to do with food safety and could cause unnecessary consumer confusion.

This confusion could lead to questions on the part of customers that our employees are not necessarily trained to answer. And because our industry is direct to the customer or maybe better put, on the front lines dealing with customers, we are ones that have to answer questions by consumers. Labels raise lots of questions and as this Committee knows the GMO issue is full of unanswered and hotly debated questions.

Finally, addition to having Ct as the only state with labeling requirements comes the added cost of doing business. Specifically, supply chains would be impacted and some suppliers may choose to pass on those costs to retailers, which could lead to higher cost to consumers or some suppliers may simply choose not to sell some products in Ct.

For these reasons, we would respectfully ask the committee to consider the impact this bill would have on our industry not pass this bill.

Thank you.