

HB 6519

I am writing today to ask you to approve HB 6519 to label genetically engineered foods in Connecticut. These bills would give CT consumers the right to know if GMOs (genetically modified organisms) are in our food - a right which citizens in 62 countries, including all of Europe, Japan, China, Australia, Brazil and New Zealand currently enjoy. It is our right to be able to make informed decisions when purchasing food for our families and customers.

Over 80 percent of processed foods sold in grocery stores contain at least one genetically-engineered ingredient, typically soy, corn, canola, sugar or cottonseed oil. Polls conducted by professional news organizations including the Washington Post, MSNBC and Reuters/NPR consistently show that over 90 percent of consumers want genetically modified ingredients labeled. Consumers have a right to know if there are GMO ingredients in their food, just as they have a right to know if there is sugar, soy, wheat, nuts, saturated fat, dairy, salt or any other ingredient they may have reasons to avoid.

GMOs are not natural and cannot be created through traditional crossbreeding methods. Rather, GMOs are created in a laboratory where DNA is extracted from one species of plant, animal, bacteria or virus and forced into another unrelated species of plant or animal to confer a desired trait such as pesticide production or herbicide tolerance.

Currently, the FDA does not require safety testing to prove that GMO foods are safe for human or animal consumption or the environment.

Some may argue that requiring GMO labels on food will prohibitively increase costs for both manufacturers and consumers, but this has not been the case in the 62 other countries where GMO labeling is mandatory. Similarly, some may say that GMO labeling will put CT farmers at a disadvantage. To the contrary, CT farmers will be treated no differently than farmers from any other state. In addition, CT has a rich tradition of valuing our local farms and farmers and supporting locally grown produce. GMO labeling will only enhance, rather than undermine this tradition, by allowing consumers to make informed choices.

Knowing what is in the foods we eat is of the utmost importance to myself, my family. We work very hard to maintain our health which has an economic benefit for society as well. Unfortunately, unless foods are labeled properly it is as if we have blinders on and all of our efforts to eat healthily are wasted.

Please support our right to know what is in our food by approving HB 6519 to label genetically engineered foods in CT.

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