

3/15/13

RE: Testimony in of Support for passage of H.B. 6519 - An Act Concerning The Labeling of Genetically Engineered Food

To: Public Health the Committee:

Distinguished members of the committee, I am a concerned Connecticut citizen asking you to support the passage of H.B. 6519. The citizens of Connecticut deserve full disclosure of the ingredients in the foods they purchase for their families. After extensive study, I am far from convinced that testing of such foods has proven them safe for consumption. In fact, the lack of independently peer reviewed testing is of great concern. The bio-tech industry should not be allowed to determine public food labeling policy.

A common argument by those opposed to labeling genetically engineered food is that the FDA approved them expressing that they bear no significant difference to conventionally grown food. GMO's were given GRAS (Generally Recognized as Safe) status by the FDA. However, in 1998, 44,000 sealed FDA documents were made public when Attorney Steven Druker sued the FDA over its policy on genetically engineered foods. In those documents the FDA's very own scientists warned about inadequate safety testing. Yet, despite failing to meet the criteria required for GRAS status as stated in the Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act, the FDA approved GMO's. One should question why then, would GMO's receive GRAS status by the FDA when its own scientists warned about the dangers? At the time of the approval the head of the FDA was Michael Taylor, former Monsanto attorney. He would later become vice president of public policy and a chief lobbyist at Monsanto before taking on his current position as the FDA's deputy commissioner for foods and veterinary medicine, unofficially the food safety czar. As a result, the approval of GMOs is suspect.

Genetically engineered foods have yet to be proven safe. In fact GMO's have been linked to serious health risks. The American Academy of Environmental Medicine states that they "pose a serious health risk in the areas of toxicology, allergy and immune function, reproductive health, and metabolic, physiologic and genetic health." GMO's may cause allergic reactions to those with sensitivities.

The lack of peer reviewed independent testing is due to the fact that genetically engineered seeds are patented. Testing them is controlled by the biotech industry. Scientists from universities with grants funded by the biotech industry risk being bullied, fired and discredited if they pursue the publishing of research showing negative impacts of GMO's. Independent scientists risk lawsuits and being publicly discredited as well. As a result, few independent peer reviewed studies exist.

Finally, the right to know what is in the very food we consume is so fundamental that I fail to comprehend how the right has thus far been denied in this area. Such a law will help consumers like myself determine which foods to purchase and which to avoid. Consumers should not be restricted to buying only organic or items from companies who have paid for testing to prove their products do not contain GMO's. This state cannot wait for a labeling requirement to be instituted at the federal level. Connecticut must take the lead on securing the fundamental right

of Connecticut consumers to know what they are purchasing. The passage of such a law will afford citizens of this state the transparency that citizens of over forty other countries like Japan, Australia, China and members of the European Union already enjoy. As such, I am asking you to support the passage of HB5619.

Respectfully,
Susan Rosenstein
Bloomfield, CT

Position Links and Reports

1. [Alliance for Bio-Integrity “Why the FDA Policy on Genetically Engineered Foods Violates Sound Science and U.S. Law”](#)
2. [Sampling of the FDA Scientists’ Memos Made Public by Steven Druker’s Lawsuit](#)
3. [American Academy of Environmental Medicine](#)
4. [Union of Concerned Scientists- Health and Environmental Risks](#)