



State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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PROGRAM REVIEW & INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE

March 15, 2013

Good Morning Senator Gerratana, Rep. Johnson and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee. Unfortunately I could not testify in person today, but I hoped to provide my thoughts on HB 6519, AN ACT CONCERNING THE LABELING OF GENETICALLY ENGINEERED FOODS.

Today, I am with the Department of Children and Families on a RBA mission in Milford. As the Committee knows, we have looked at a similar bill in the Children's Committee concerning Genetically Engineered Foods in Baby Food.

You will hear extensive testimony today but I believe one of the main questions you will need answered is exactly how the DNA from one cell is introduced to another cell. It is not a benign process.

There are essentially two methods. You either need to trick the cell or declare war on the cell. In the former method, a bacteria is used to penetrate the cell with the new genetic material, otherwise the cell would not accept the foreign DNA (It is not the same process by which we propagate crops for certain genetic traits).

In the latter method, a gene gun is used to bombard the cell with the foreign DNA. In producing the desired combination, sometimes a new combination is produced that was not anticipated.

The fact that the DNA is forcibly introduced to the cell, is worrisome at best. If the cell needs to be tricked or attacked in order to accept the foreign DNA, any logical person would suspect that this process could eventually have unanticipated consequences.

There are many reasons to inform the consumer about the foods they consume, but I am also aware of the issue of constitutionality. However, today you will hear that there are

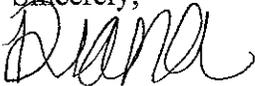
studies that indicate that Bacillus thuringiensis (Bt) has been found in pregnant mothers and their unborn children. As Bt kills the insect by exploding its insides, this goes beyond the consumer's right to know and clearly enters the realm of health impacts.

In addition, because Monsanto holds a patent on genetic engineering, independent research has been extremely difficult.

I realize we are contemplating breaking new ground here. The Children's Committee JF'ed our bill concerning genetically engineered baby food on Tuesday with only one negative vote. In other words, there was bipartisan support.

I look forward to working with you on moving this bill forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Diana Urban".

Diana Urban

Co-Chair, Children's Committee