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Martin Mador, Legislative Chair

Committee on Children  
February 24, 2015

Testimony In Support of  
HB 6798 AAA Requiring Labeling of Baby Food and Infant Formula  
Containing Genetically Engineered Organisms

I am Martin Mador, 130 Highland Ave., Hamden, CT 06518. I am the volunteer Legislative Chair for the Connecticut Chapter of the Sierra Club. I hold a Masters of Environmental Management degree from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.

Thanks to each of you for serving on this most important committee.

The Sierra Club made GMO labeling a legislative priority several years ago, and we continue to be fully supportive on the issue.

You have heard testimony on the merits of the bill from my colleagues who have accumulated considerable expertise over the past few years, so I think I will use my 3 minutes to present what I will call the Mission Statement for the bill.

Corporate culture must embrace protecting the health and welfare of their customers. In this complex society, the priority list for corporations must have more on it than simply making money.

You cannot claim there is no proof of GMO hazard and at the same time withhold your product from scientific scrutiny. Monsanto et al licenses the GMO seeds they produce, and will not allow them to be used for medical study. This is disingenuous, to put it politely.

We are not in a court of law with strict standards of evidence and the need for a finding beyond some legal standard. We are in the legislature, which has an affirmative duty to protect the public health and welfare. We certainly need to know more about the effects of GMO biologic engineering, on both the human and non-human worlds. So we are not asking for a ban, but for labelling, to empower parents to decide themselves what is safe for their families to eat.

Meanwhile, we certainly understand the toxic effects of massive application of pesticides, which is the point of GMO engineering. Remember the purpose of pesticides? Why they were created? To kill living things.

Corporations wilfully disregarding the public welfare and the harm they create is reprehensible conduct. We feel legislative action is an effective and appropriate way to protect the public interests of society.

One of the most important concepts I have come across in my years of legislative advocacy is the Precautionary Principle. It teaches that, once there are credible grounds to believe something may be harmful, then the time has come to take action. It is often applied in Europe, and is just starting to take hold in America. Avoiding harm must be our first principle. Protecting the health of our environment, our population, our wildlife, must come first.

So pass this bill. Ensure it becomes law. Take your responsibility as representatives of your constituents seriously. We know you do, and will. Do it for our children.