



H.112 The Vermont Genetically Engineered Food Labeling Act

What is the Vermont Genetically Engineered Food Labeling Act?

The Act (H.112) protects the health and safety of Vermonters and prevents consumer deception by providing Vermonters with information about whether or not the foods they buy and feed to their families have been produced using genetic engineering technologies.

What is genetically engineered (GE) food?

- Food that has been produced using laboratory techniques that insert genetic material (DNA) from diverse species of plants, animals, viruses, and/or bacteria, into the DNA of host plants or animals, such as corn, soybeans or salmon. The changes that are produced by this process are ones that cannot occur in nature. Almost all GE plants are engineered to resist repeated applications of chemicals or to produce their own insect toxins.
- GE products are commonly referred to as GMOs (genetically modified organisms) or as transgenic.

Why is labeling genetically engineered food important?

- Over 90% of Vermonters support the labeling of genetically engineered foods.¹
- An estimated 75-80% of processed foods sold in the United States are produced using GE ingredients.²
- A growing number of published international studies indicate that there may be significant health and environmental risks associated with the production and consumption of GE foods.³
- The FDA does not require or conduct independent safety studies of GE foods. GE food developers themselves decide what information they will provide to the agency.

Who Else Labels GE Foods?

More than 60 countries mandate the labeling of genetically engineered foods. These nations include member nations in the European Union, Japan, Australia, Brazil, Russia, China and many more.



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Vermont has the power to label GE foods.

Yes. The State of Vermont has the power to prevent consumer deception and to protect Vermonters from the health and safety risks associated with GE foods. Labeling GE foods will give consumers the ability to avoid the unwanted risks associated with GE foods.

Labeling GE foods will help prevent consumer deception.

The Vermont GE Food Labeling Act (H.112) would require foods produced using genetic engineering to be labeled as such. It would also prohibit genetically engineered food from being advertised as “natural,” “naturally made,” “naturally grown,” “all natural,” or any other similar language that would tend to mislead the consumer.

Without labeling, it is difficult to track the health effects of GE foods.

Labeling would give the state the ability to track any effects these foods might be having on the health of Vermonters, and to better understand the possible threats that these foods pose.

Labeling GE foods will cost consumers almost nothing.

Reports prepared by Oregon State University (2002) and Emory University School of Law (2012) found costs associated with GE labeling to be negligible, less than \$2.00 per person/year.^{4,5}

Labeling will create market opportunities for conventional non-GE crops.

National polls indicate that the great majority of Americans want GE food labeled. Sales of non-GE foods are expanding faster than any other category of food products. A GE food labeling law would provide expanded market opportunities for farmers growing non-GE crops and producers making non-GE food.

Vermont companies are already finding alternatives to GE ingredients.

Most ingredients are readily available in non-GE forms. Farmers and ingredient manufacturers are rapidly scaling up production in response to growing demand. Large manufacturers already produce non-GE versions of their products for sale in international markets.

Citations:

1. Allison Kopicki, *Strong Support for Labeling Modified Foods*, New York Times (July 27, 2013), available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/28/science/strong-support-for-labeling-modified-foods.html>
2. Briefs: Environmental Nutrition, *The Push to Label Genetically Engineered Foods*, Chicago Tribune (July 4, 2012), available at http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2012-07-04/lifestyle/sns-201207031600--tms--premhnr--k-k20120704-20120704_1_fresh-fish-omega-3-lake-trout
3. European Network of Scientists for Social and Environmental Responsibility (ENSSER), *No scientific consensus on safety of genetically modified organisms* (Oct 21, 2013), available at <http://www.ensser.org/increasing-public-information/no-scientific-consensus-on-gmo-safety/>
4. Joanna M. Shepherd-Bailey, Ph.D., *Economic Assessment: Proposed California Right To Know Genetically Engineered Food Act (Prop 37) Likely To Cause No Change in Food Prices, Minor Litigation Costs and Negligible Administrative Costs*, Emory University School of Law (undated report), available at <http://www.anh-usa.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/GE-Food-Act-Costs-Assessment.pdf>
5. Jaeger, W.K., *Economic Issues and Oregon Ballot Measure 27: Labeling of Genetically Engineered Foods*, Oregon State University Extension Service, Publication EM 8817 (October 2002)

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