

Take Action for GMO Labeling in Vermont



In May of 2013, Vermont became the first state in the country to pass a common sense GMO labeling bill through any legislative body when the Vermont House of Representatives passed H.112 by a vote of 99-42. Now, in the 2014 legislative session, we will pass this bill through the Senate and it will become law.

What our opponents have in money, we have in supporters. Grassroots organizing will be our most effective tool in building an undeniable popular movement. Here are some ways you can help build that movement.

Contact your Legislators – Sometimes, the best way to tell your legislators something is to, well, tell them. Send your legislators a quick email or just give them a phone call telling them where you stand; then tell us how they respond. Find your legislators' contact information at www.bit.ly/vtrighttoknow_legislator-contact. As always, tell your friends, family, and neighbors to do the same.

Share the VT Right to Know GMOs Petition – Our petition is not only a great way to show legislators just how popular and important this issue is, it's also a good way to sign up activists and citizens to receive our email alerts. The more people we have on our list, the more people we can activate when grassroots pressure is needed. Sign up as many people as you can, then send the petition back to VPIRG so we can add your people to our list. Find our petition at bit.ly/labelGMOsVT.

Talk to Your Food Producers – We've heard from many food producers and farmers who think a labeling law would open new GMO-free market opportunities and would enhance the purity of the Vermont brand. Ben & Jerry's, Drew's Dressing, and Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility are among the producers and advocates who support a GMO labeling law, and you can help us grow that list! If you know people in the food industry, ask them how they feel about GE labeling and ask them to sign our letter of support online at bit.ly/vtrighttoknow_producer-sign-on-letter. Prefer paper? For a print version of the petition, type bit.ly/vtrighttoknow_producer-sign-on-letter-to-print into your browser. Mail signed statements back to us at: VPIRG c/o Falko Schilling 141 Main St. Ste. 6 Montpelier, VT 05602

Spread the Word – We need Vermonters in every city and town to be informed and engaged. You have the opportunity to share all of these actions with your friends. Just called your legislator? Have your neighbors do the same! Wrote a letter to the editor? Have a friend respond to it! It's simple; just talk to your friends, family, and neighbors about our campaign. Point them to our website at VTRighttoKnow.org or our Facebook page at facebook.com/VTRighttoKnow.

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Print and Post our Campaign Poster – This is a great way to boost campaign awareness in your own community. Our poster has a QR code to take smartphone users to our website and text URLs for others. You can download the poster from the GMO Action Center page at <http://www.vtrighttoknowgmos.org/gmo-action-center/build-support/>. Then, post them in your local co-op, community center, supportive local businesses or anywhere it will be seen by your community.

Write a Letter to the Editor – Letters to the editor in your local newspaper are a great tool for building awareness about GMO labeling. Newspapers and other media outlets often use letters to the editor to gauge reader interest in different issues. If they receive tons of letters about labeling, you can believe that they'll start printing more stories about the effort. Not only that, but politicians notice. Legislators frequently read letters to newspapers in their district. Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper and start the conversation about GMO labeling in your own community.

Tips for Writing a Letter to the Editor

Media outlets can sometimes get hundreds of letters each day, especially if there is a hot or contentious issue up for debate. Here are a few tips that will ensure that your letter rises to the top of the pile.

Keep it short and to the point. Going over a newspaper's word limit will likely mean your letter won't be published. Short and to the point is better - jump right in and tackle the subject matter head on.

Tell your story. Readers will connect with a personal story better than they will a letter that's just dry facts. Personal stories that connect to a political issue are best. (Ex: "I support GMO labeling because I have a child with serious food allergies.") Always use reputable facts or statistics to support your anecdotes.

Include all your contact information. Newspapers often need to verify that the letters are genuine, so include your full name, town of residence and your daytime phone number. If you have a title that relates to the subject matter of the letter, such as being the owner of a local business or the executive director of an organization, include that under your name at the bottom of the letter; it will help to legitimize your point of view.

Make it easy. Email is the preferred way to send in the letter. Don't include it as an attachment; type or paste it right into the body of the email. Be sure to include a subject header that notes this is a letter to the editor and what the subject matter is. (Ex: "Letter to Editor: Support GMO Labeling")

Where to submit letters to the editor:

- Burlington Free Press: letters@bfp.burlingtonfreepress.com
- Times Argus: <http://timesargus.com/section/OPINION03>
- Rutland Herald: <http://rutlandherald.com/section/SERVICES07>
- Bennington Banner: news@benningtonbanner.com
- Brattleboro Reformer: news@reformer.com
- Seven Days: <http://www.7dvt.com/feedback>
- Valley News: forum@vnews.com

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