Labeling Genetically Engineered Foods

- H.112 is defensible and can withstand a legal challenge.
- Vermonters have made it clear that they need to know whether there are GMOs in the foods they are purchasing, and they have good reasons for that.
- The State of Vermont shares Vermonters’ concerns, and the State has a right and responsibility to address them.

For H.112 to be upheld under the First Amendment the state would need to be able to show that the regulation is reasonably related to a legitimate government interest. The legitimate government interests adopted in this bill are listed below.

Protecting Vermonters from potential health risks

- There is a lack of consensus on the safety of GMO foods. A reasonable way to address this lack of consensus is to label genetically engineered foods in order to let consumers avoid foods that are of concern to them.

Preventing consumer confusion and deception

- There is widespread confusion among consumers about what foods are genetically engineered. Labeling genetically engineered foods is a reasonable way to make sure consumers know what foods are produced with genetic engineering.
- Currently genetically engineered foods are allowed to be labeled as “all natural.” H.112 would stop this deceptive advertising practice.

Avoiding the environmental issues associated with producing genetically engineered foods

- Agricultural practices associated with producing genetically engineered crops have led to an increase in the use of herbicides and other matters of environmental concern. Labeling genetically engineered foods would allow consumers to avoid products that were produced using agricultural practices that they do not approve of.

Protecting religious practices

- Some religious groups have concerns about consuming genetically engineered foods. Labeling genetically engineered foods would allow people with religious concerns to avoid eating them.