

OFFICE OF LT. GOVERNOR

SUE ELLSPERMANN

STATE HOUSE, ROOM 333
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA 46204-2732
sellspermann@lg.in.gov
(317) 232-4545

November 19, 2015

The Honorable Dan Coats
United States Senate
493 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Joe Donnelly
United States Senate
720 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Coats and Senator Donnelly,

Earlier this year, the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 1599, the Safe and Accurate Food Labeling Act of 2015, that would prohibit a patchwork of state labeling laws on genetically modified organisms (GMOs). Although the legislation passed with bipartisan support in the U.S. House, it is facing obstacles in the Senate. Therefore, I urge you to support H.R. 1599 and work to encourage its passage in the Senate.

Numerous scientific studies from The World Health Organization, the American Medical Association, the National Academy of Sciences and the American Association for the Advancement of Science have confirmed that GMOs are safe. In addition, the use of GMOs has allowed our farmers and producers to help meet the challenge of feeding the world which is estimated to double by 2050.

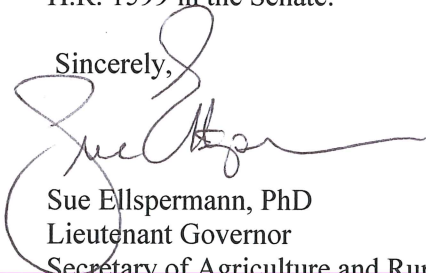
Despite scientific evidence, labeling efforts have occurred in states across the country. Vermont's labeling law is set to begin in 2016 if action is not taken on the federal level. Maine and Connecticut also have laws that are contingent on other states passing labeling laws. Furthermore, efforts are underway in other states to pass labeling laws. The result will be a patchwork of regulations that will create unnecessary regulatory burdens that do not advance science and may negatively affect food security. It is entirely appropriate for companies to choose to label their products as non-GMO, but forcing companies to identify a product that has been made with ingredients that have been found to be safe adds unnecessary regulations and costs.

Having spent time in the food manufacturing industry, I have a personal knowledge of food production. As states adopt different labeling laws, companies will have to segregate, have multiple labels, and adopt new practices to comply with the different regulations. This will disrupt their processes and create higher food costs for consumers.

A recent study conducted by Cornell University analyzed a proposed labeling law in New York and found that a family of four would pay \$500 more per year and require the state to spend millions in enforcement. Even in states where there are no labeling laws, consumers could still have to pay higher food costs because of the laws in other states. Hoosiers should not have to pay higher food costs because of other states' labeling laws.

I am a strong believer and champion of state-based approaches; however, the GMO labeling movement has the potential to disrupt and diminish our nation's food system. Therefore, I feel federal action is necessary. H.R. 1599 has been supported by the Coalition for Safe and Affordable Food which has numerous Indiana members as well as the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture. I believe it is the common sense solution to address the situation and would strongly urge your support for H.R. 1599 in the Senate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sue Ellspermann", written over a circular stamp or seal.

Sue Ellspermann, PhD
Lieutenant Governor
Secretary of Agriculture and Rural Development