

PRESIDENT OBAMA: VETO "THE DARK ACT"

WE ALL HAVE THE RIGHT TO KNOW IF GMOs ARE IN OUR FOOD

LAST WEEK, nearly 300 consumer, health, farmer, and environmental organizations and food companies representing millions of Americans sent a letter to President Obama urging him to veto a bill, known as "The DARK Act." If passed this bill will deny consumers the right to know if their foods contain genetically engineered (GMO) ingredients. All other food labels, such as those involving calories and nutrition, are on-package, clear and consistent. "The DARK Act" instead allows companies to hide information about GMO content in digital (QR) codes, 800 numbers or websites. This not only puts an unacceptable burden on consumers, but also discriminates against Americans who do not own smartphones—one third of our population. The bill could also exempt from labeling most GMO foods currently on the market. We ALL have a right to know how our food is produced.



“The GMO labeling law's principal thrust is to rely on QR codes which shoppers will scan to gain product information relative to GMOs. One hundred million Americans, most of them poor, people of color and elderly either do not own a smartphone or an iPhone to scan the QR code or live in an area of poor internet connectivity. There are serious questions of discrimination presented here and unresolved matters of equal protection of the law.”

—REV. JESSE JACKSON, in a letter sent to President Obama, July 14, 2016 (emphasis added)



DEAR PRESIDENT OBAMA,

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED 287 consumer, environmental, health, and farming organizations and food companies, urge a swift veto on S.764, a proposal on GMO labeling that falls far short of the clear on-package mandatory labeling that consumers expect.

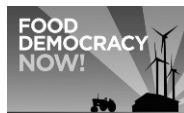
The bill S. 764 is deeply flawed. Look no further than the disagreement between the FDA, the agency charged with labeling authority for many foods, and the USDA. The FDA argues that the bill may not lead to a single label, because of the inadequate definition adopted by the Senate. The USDA's clarification is vague at best and leaves far too much room for future interpretation as to which genetically engineered foods will require labeling.

Even if the rules and regulations can be developed, S. 764 allows companies to conceal genetically engineered ingredient information behind QR Codes, websites or 800 numbers which would require consumers to have internet access and a smartphone to determine what's in their food. This is confusing and discriminatory. Shoppers don't have the time to use a QR code reader or make a cell phone call for every product they wish to buy. The

challenges in low-income and rural communities are even greater, where smartphones, adequate data plans and good network coverage are often not a reality of everyday life.

The campaign promise that you made in 2007, that, "we'll let folks know if their food has been genetically modified because Americans should know what they are buying," will not be fulfilled by this bill. We are asking for four simple words clearly written on the package, "Produced with genetic engineering." This label is already being found throughout grocery stores across the country as companies label their food for the Vermont GMO labeling law that went into effect on July 1, 2016. American companies had no problem complying with Vermont's law and food costs did not go up despite repeated false warnings from the Grocery Manufacturers Association that it would.

The federal government should not preempt the GMO labeling laws on the books in Vermont, Connecticut and Maine unless Congress is prepared to pass a law that is as strong as the standards being set by the states. Please Veto S.764 and stand with the American people.



SIGNED BY 287 NATIONAL, STATE, AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS AND COMPANIES, INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING:

American Sustainable Business Council • Ben & Jerry's, Homemade Inc. • Beyond Pesticides • Center for Food Safety • Citizens for GMO Labeling • Community Food and Justice Coalition • Consumers Union • Dr. Bronner's • Eco-Justice Ministries • Experimental Farm Network • Family Farm Defenders • Farm Aid • Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance • Food & Water Watch • Food Babe • Food Democracy Now! • Food Empowerment Project • Friends of the Earth • GMO Action Alliance • GMO Free USA • GMO Inside • Green America • Greenbuilder.com • Greenpeace USA • Holistic Orchard Network • Institute for Responsible Technology • Iroquois Valley Farms, LLC • Labelgmos.org • Matt's Cookie Bars • Moms Across America • Moms Advocating Sustainability • Moms For Safe Food • National Family Farm Coalition • Nature's Path Foods Inc. • Non-GMO Project • Northeast Organic Farming Associations of Connecticut / Massachusetts / New York / Vermont • Nutiva • Organic Consumers Association • Organic Seed Alliance • Organic Seed Growers & Trade Association • Physicians For Social Responsibility • Presence Marketing • Real Food Challenge • Rodale Institute • Rural Coalition • Slow Food USA • The Cornucopia Institute • U.S. Right to Know

Call the White House today at 202-456-1414
and urge President Obama to VETO "The DARK Act."