

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 8, 2012

Join Bicameral Letter Asking FDA to Label Genetically Engineered Foods

Dear Colleague:

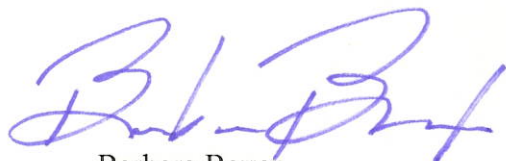
As Americans we pride ourselves on our freedoms. Some of these freedoms strike at the most personal level, such as the freedom to choose what we eat and feed our families. However, our free and open markets can only be strong when they are accountable and transparent. When Americans are not provided accurate and essential information about the products they purchase they do not have the freedom to make choices. That is why we urge you to join us in support of a recent legal petition filed on behalf of over 400 organizations and businesses to urge the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to require clear labeling of genetically engineered (GE) foods.

In a decades old policy, the FDA concluded that genetically engineered foods are not “materially different” from conventional foods and therefore do not require labeling. Consumers disagree. Polls have repeatedly shown that the overwhelming majority of Americans—over 90% in most polls—believe the federal government should require mandatory labeling of GE foods. Since the labeling petition was filed in October 2011, over half a million comments have been submitted in support of labeling.

Opponents of providing consumers this basic right to information will argue that it would only confuse consumers, be costly, or imply that the products are unsafe. Yet, the FDA requires the labeling of over 3,000 ingredients, additives, and processes; providing basic information doesn’t confuse the public, it empowers them to make choices. Absent labeling, consumers will continue to be deceived by current labeling practices. For example nearly 80% of processed foods on supermarket shelves contain GE ingredients, many marketed with labels such as “all natural” or “natural”.

We reject the false dichotomy that being for GE food labeling is being anti-GE foods. This isn’t a matter of being for or against GE foods, it’s a basic stance that consumers should be the ones to decide what they eat and feed their families. GE foods require labeling in nearly 50 countries around the world including Russia, Japan, China, Australia, New Zealand and many others. The FDA should protect consumer rights and prevent consumer deception by requiring the labeling of GE foods. By giving American consumers information fundamental to their choices in the marketplace, we protect and promote the integrity and health of our economy.

Again, we hope you can join us in a letter of support to the FDA regarding the labeling petition. If you would like to sign on, or have any questions, please contact Joaquin Esquivel in Senator Boxer’s office at (202) 224-3553 or Megan DeBates in Congressman DeFazio’s office at (202) 225-6416.



Barbara Boxer
United States Senator

Sincerely,



Peter DeFazio
United States Congressman