

Resolution 3B

California Right to Know Genetically Engineered Food

2012 The U.S. Health Freedom Congress

Schaumburg, IL, June 14, 2012

Referring to The California Right to Know Genetically Engineered Food Act Ballot Initiative to be put on the CA ballot November 2012

“STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of the measure is to create and enforce the fundamental right of the people of California to be fully informed about whether the food they purchase and eat is genetically engineered and not misbranded as natural so that they can choose for themselves whether to purchase and eat such foods. It shall be liberally construed to fulfill this purpose.

FINDINGS AND DECLARATIONS

- (a) California consumers have the right to know whether the foods they purchase were produced using genetic engineering. Genetic engineering of plants and animals often causes unintended consequences. Manipulating genes and inserting them into organisms is an imprecise process. The results are not always predictable or controllable, and they can lead to adverse health or environmental consequences.
- (b) Government scientists have stated that the artificial insertion of DNA into plants, a technique unique to genetic engineering, can cause a variety of significant problems with plant foods. Such genetic engineering can increase the levels of known toxicants in foods and introduce new toxicants and health concerns.
- (c) Mandatory identification of foods produced through genetic engineering can provide a critical method for tracking the potential health effects of eating genetically engineered foods.
- (d) No federal or California law requires that food producers identify whether foods were produced using genetic engineering. At the same time, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration does not require safety studies of such foods. Unless these foods contain a known allergen, the FDA does not even require developers of genetically engineered crops to consult with the agency.
- (e) Polls consistently show that more than 90 percent of the public want to know if their food was produced using genetic engineering.

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(f) Fifty countries—including the European Union member states, Japan and other key U.S. trading partners—have laws mandating disclosure of genetically engineered foods. No international agreements prohibit the mandatory identification of foods produced through genetic engineering.

(g) Without disclosure, consumers of genetically engineered food can unknowingly violate their own dietary and religious restrictions.

(h) The cultivation of genetically engineered crops can also cause serious impacts to the environment. For example, most genetically engineered crops are designed to withstand weed-killing pesticides known as herbicides. As a result, hundreds of millions of pounds of additional herbicides have been used on U.S. farms. Because of the massive use of such products, herbicide-resistant weeds have flourished—a problem that has resulted, in turn, in the use of increasingly toxic herbicides. These toxic herbicides damage our agricultural areas, impair our drinking water, and pose health risks to farm workers and consumers. California consumers should have the choice to avoid purchasing foods production of which can lead to such environmental harm.

(i) Organic farming is a significant and increasingly important part of California agriculture. California has more organic cropland than any other state and has almost one out of every four certified organic operations in the nation. California's organic agriculture is growing faster than 20 percent a year.

(j) Organic farmers are prohibited from using genetically engineered seeds. Nonetheless, these farmers' crops are regularly threatened with accidental contamination from neighboring lands where genetically engineered crops abound. This risk of contamination can erode public confidence in California's organic products, significantly undermining this industry. Californians should have the choice to avoid purchasing foods whose production could harm the state's organic farmers and its organic foods industry.

(k) The labeling, advertising and marketing of genetically engineered foods using terms such as "natural," "naturally made," "naturally grown," or "all natural" is misleading to California consumers." (CA Right to Know Initiative 2012).

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 2012 United States Health Freedom Congress hereby endorses in its entirety the language and recommendations of the California Right to Know Genetically Engineered Food Act and the Ballot Initiative to be voted on in the November 2012 CA ballot and holds that, if adopted into law would:

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- (i) create and enforce the fundamental right of the people of California to be fully informed about whether the food they purchase and eat is genetically engineered and not misbranded as natural so that they can choose for themselves whether to purchase and eat such foods; and
- (ii) protect the fundamental right of consumers to make personal food choices and health related choices for their own sustenance, health, and survival; and
- (iii) protect the fundamental right of consumers to have access to all information that ensures their right to make informed decisions regarding the use of genetically engineered food and products.