

To label or not to label? The California GMO labeling initiative gears up for the big vote



The anticipation builds as voters prepare to head to the polls for November's election. And for those voters in California, this election brings something new to the table: the possibility of California being the first state to require labeling of genetically modified foods.

California's Right to Know Genetically Engineered Food Act will be on November's ballot as Proposition 37. If passed, this law would require all genetically altered foods to be labeled as such in the state of California. The proposition has a host of advocacy groups behind it, including the Sierra Club, [Organic Consumers Association](#), [Center for Food Safety](#), [Food Democracy Now](#), and others.

Opponents of the labeling initiative say that it could potentially raise the price of food and increase or encourage litigation. Kathy Fairbanks, a spokeswoman for Stop Costly Food Labeling said that "setting up a California only distribution system for foods is costly." California's Legislative Analyst's Office found that [concluded](#) that it could cost as much as \$1 million a year to administer, in addition to "unknown, but potentially significant" costs associated with litigation.

Opponents also emphasize that the FDA has continuously studied genetically modified foods, and has found no health hazards.

Several polls show [support](#) for the labeling initiative. A poll conducted in April by San Francisco TV station KCBS found that 91% of Californians back labeling.

Many scientists and supporters of genetically modified foods worry that labeling foods will cause the public to reject the foods because they may think their health is at risk, without knowing the science behind what they may be eating. These supporters worry that the general public won't [understand](#) the environmental and economic benefits associated with these GMOs.

If the proposition passes in November, Americans are sure to see the push for the same labeling in other states. Either way, the controversy surrounding GMOs is sure to continue.

Additional Resources:

- [Fighting GMO labeling in California is food lobby's highest priority](#), Huffington Post