

Oral arguments over Vermont GMO label law challenge set for December

A federal judge will hear oral arguments over Vermont's genetically modified organism labeling law in mid-December.

The plaintiffs have asked for a preliminary injunction to stop the labeling law from going into effect in July 2016, as currently scheduled.

Mandatory GMO labeling violates the free speech rights of food manufacturers "because it is a politically motivated speech regulation that does not serve a legitimate governmental interest," plaintiffs said in a court brief. The law is discriminatory because food manufacturers who use GMO ingredients must devote space on their product labels to convey this information, while companies that don't use GMOs won't have to make any disclosures, the plaintiffs said.

"It burdens the speech of manufacturers who have not yielded to personal and political sentiments against genetic engineering," the brief said.

The 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals previously blocked a Vermont law that required companies to label milk from cows treated with a synthetic growth hormone, which means the judge should issue a similar injunction in this case, they said.

Attorneys for the State of Vermont argue that the government does have a legitimate reason to mandate GMO labels, as required by legal precedents for compelling commercial speech. Passage of the labeling law "was expressly prompted by health and safety concerns — not to mention the goals of environmental protection, prevention of consumer deception and religious accommodation," the state attorneys said in a court brief.

Read full original article: [Vermont's GMO label law faces legal test](#)