

## Los Angeles symbolic GMO ban reinforces misinformation

The Los Angeles City Council voted in late October to draft an ordinance that would prohibit the sale or planting of GM seeds and plants.

One individual in Los Angeles who has not taken leave of his senses, Bob Goldberg, a member of the National Academy of Science and a professor at UCLA, has pointed out that “The impact will be zero...” because there are currently no “GMO” crops grown anywhere in LA County “other than in research laboratories” and that “genetically modified crops are no different from those that farmers have been selectively breeding for centuries, and they pose no added health risk.”

For the moment, the practical impact of this ignorant posturing would be nil, the symbolic impact of the political leaders of Los Angeles slamming the door on the technology that offers some of the best (if not the only) hope of producing improved, [drought tolerant crops](#), or rescuing California’s [wine](#) and [citrus](#) industries from exotic pests and diseases, is disappointing.

The City Council asserts their action is necessary “in the absence of State or Federal action”, and because of

... various concerns regarding the use of GM products, including but not limited to the safety of consumption of GM foods, as well as the threat GM crops pose to the survival of non-GM crops and biodiversity in general. GMOs have also been linked to colony collapse disorder. In response to these concerns, more than 60 countries around the world have imposed significant restrictions or outright bans on the production and sale of GM products...

The action by the LA City Council in each and every particular as the *LA Times* has [noted](#). But as cognitive psychology has begun [to clarify](#) for us, sharing facts in an effort to persuade somebody in the grip of a hallucinatory ideology can, ironically, serve to reinforce their mistaken beliefs. In the end, it’s really about values, not facts.

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