

False claim of ‘no consensus on GMO safety’ at heart of Vermont’s labeling bill

Several food industry trade groups, including the Grocery Manufacturers of America (GMA), filed suit in June 2014 to prevent Vermont’s GMO labeling law from going into effect in June 2016. Notably, attorneys representing Vermont have expressly argued that the law was “expressly prompted by health and safety concerns.”

Food industry trade groups contend that the debate regarding GMO products is over and, accordingly, Vermont had “no basis whatsoever” to be concerned about health and safety issues when it enacted the labeling law.

In response, attorneys representing the State of Vermont contend that the first of four purposes behind the labeling law is to enable persons to “make informed decisions regarding the potential health effects of the food they purchase and consume,” and, if they choose, to “avoid potential health risks of food produced from genetic engineering.” In this regard, the attorneys cite the following legislative findings:

- There are “conflicting studies assessing the health consequences of food produced from genetic engineering;”
- Genetic engineering of plants and animals may cause unintended consequences;
- “FDA relies entirely on safety studies submitted by manufacturers...while independent scientists may be limited in their ability to assess genetically engineered (GE) foods because of industry or patent restrictions on research;” and
- “[N]o long-term or epidemiologic studies have been conducted in the United States examining the safety of human consumption of GE foods.”

In light of this “scientific uncertainty,” the attorneys argue, the only certainty is that lack of GMO labeling means that “consumers with health, environmental, and religious concerns related to GE foods are left in the dark about whether the food they purchase was in fact produced with genetic engineering.”

Read full, original article: [Health and Safety Arguments over GMO Labeling](#)