

Congress stalled on GMO labeling with Vermont law going into effect soon

**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis.**

The food industry is pressuring Congress to act before the state of Vermont requires food labels for genetically modified ingredients.

At issue is how food companies will deal with Vermont's law. They could make separate food packages just for the state, label all their items with genetically modified ingredients or withdraw from the small Vermont market. The law kicks in by July, but the companies have to start making those decisions now.

The food industry wants Congress to pre-empt Vermont's law and bar mandatory labeling of genetically modified foods before it goes into effect. . . . Labeling advocates have been fighting state-by-state to enact the labeling, with the eventual goal of a national standard.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack brought the parties together twice this month to see if they could work out a compromise. . . . Lawmakers on Capitol Hill are divided, too, but agree that a compromise needs to be worked out before this summer.

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Congress is still trying to find common ground. Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman Pat Roberts, R-Kan., says he wants to take up a bill soon, before Vermont's law goes into effect. The panel's top Democrat, Debbie Stabenow of Michigan, and Republican Sen. John Hoeven of North Dakota have been working to find bipartisan compromise.

"We're not there yet," Hoeven said earlier this month.

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As Congress has stalled on the issue, some companies are already prepared to deal with the Vermont law.

Campbell Soup said earlier [in January] it now supports mandatory national labeling for products containing genetically modified ingredients, and that it will stop backing efforts opposing the disclosures.

**Read full, original post:** Food industry looks to Congress as GMO labeling law nears