

Agricultural Secretary Vilsack: Up to Congress to resolve GMO labeling

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The biotech labeling negotiations led by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack broke down over whether GMOs had to be disclosed on food labels or whether it would be enough to ensure that electronic disclosure would be adequate to serve consumers, he says.

Vilsack, testifying before the House Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee on February 11, made his first public comments about two days of meetings last month. . .

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The Grocery Manufacturers Association is lobbying Congress to preempt state GMO labeling laws and to allow food companies to disclose biotech ingredients on the web and through smartphone-based system called SmartLabel.

The talks never resolved what else might be required, Vilsack said.

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"I think that's kind of where our conversation broke apart. It's something that Congress is going to have to address."

The House passed a bill last summer that would have blocked [state labeling laws], but the industry has so far been unable to find enough Democratic support to move similar legislation in the Senate.

Senate Agriculture Chairman Pat Roberts, R-Kansas, has been preparing to release a bill to increase pressure on uncommitted Democrats. "Stay tuned," he said February 11, when asked when it would be introduced.

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The chairman of the House subcommittee, Robert Aderholt, R-Ala., told Vilsack that his department needs to step up its public education efforts to assure consumers of the safety of genetically engineered crops.

Vilsack said the industry needed to do more on its own and that he expected a more "aggressive effort from this point forward."

Read full, original post: [Vilsack: Congress must resolve GMO labeling dispute](#)