

## Michigan Sen Stabenow opposes SmartLabel bill after fundraiser with Big Organic

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Four organic-food industry executives held a fundraiser on Friday for Michigan Sen. Debbie Stabenow — the Senate’s leading Democrat on agriculture issues — just days before the chamber was set to take up a controversial bill with hundreds of millions of dollars on the line for U.S. food companies.

The event for Stabenow — the top Democrat on the Senate Agriculture Committee — in Anaheim, California, was co-hosted by Whole Foods co-CEO Walter Robb, Stonyfield Farms Chairman Gary Hirshberg, Organic Valley CEO George Siemon and Laura Batcha, head of the Organic Trade Association. . . .

“And with many millions being spent to weaken organic and to block mandatory GMO labeling,” he added, “we need Senator Stabenow now more than ever.”

A Stabenow aide said the fundraiser had been in the works for months and was not timed to coincide with action on the Republican-authored bill. . . .

On [March 15], Stabenow sided with organic food companies and came out against the bill, authored by Agriculture Committee Chairman Pat Roberts (R-Kan.). Opponents argue the legislation fails consumers by preventing states from requiring labels on food products that contain genetically modified organisms, or GMOs. Stabenow’s opposition is a serious blow to the bill’s chances of clearing a Democratic filibuster.

Stabenow’s office said there was nothing untoward about her participating in the fundraiser even as the Senate was set to begin debate on the GMO bill.

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Stabenow’s office would not say how much she raised during Friday’s fundraiser.

**Read full, original post:** [Stabenow sides with organic companies after fundraiser](#)