

Senate votes on SmartLabel for GMO labeling, would preempt Vermont's mandatory standard

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. . . [T]he Senate [is voting] on a measure that would create voluntary national standards for labeling food with genetically modified ingredients. The bill would prevent states from mandating labels just before Vermont was set to become the first in the nation to impose such requirements.

But the measure most likely lacks sufficient support from Democrats, most of whom would like to see a mandatory labeling program that offers food manufacturers different options for presenting the information, including a simple symbol. That means the legislation will almost certainly have to be revised.

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A federal labeling law that pre-empts a state's ability to write its own would seem out of step with the congressional Republican orthodoxy, which tends to favor states' prerogatives in policy making and regulations.

But there is a concern among many lawmakers — including some Democrats from farm states — that mandatory laws would increase [food prices](#) and unfairly hamper food producers.

Large food and biotech companies have spent hundreds of millions of dollars fighting a mandatory label, and those favoring labeling have logged hundreds of hours over the last month in meetings with senators and their aides.

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Republicans insisted that they had gone out of their way to give concessions to pro-labeling factions — whose ranks include famous chefs and movie stars — by adding language to the bill that creates a mandatory labeling program if the voluntary program is ineffective after several years.

Under the bill, the Agriculture Department would establish a national voluntary marketing standard for foods that are bioengineered or may contain bioengineering and encourage participation with incentives.

Read full, original post: [Senate to Vote on GMO Food Labeling Bill](#)