

Farm groups back South Australia plan to allow GMO crop cultivation, citing 'freedom of choice' for growers

South Australia's Parliament has taken another step towards legalizing the commercial cultivation of genetically modified (GM) crops, voting to approve a bipartisan compromise framework to allow GM crops to be grown on mainland SA, but not Kangaroo Island.

South Australia has had a moratorium on the growing of GM crops since 2004.

Under the compromise framework, all mainland local councils will have a time-limited ability to apply for designation as a GM-free area for trade and marketing purposes.

Councils which believe they derive a premium from GM-free status can apply to the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development in the next six months to retain the moratorium for their council area. The final decision on whether that exemption is granted will reside with the Minister.

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Grain Producers South Australia (GPSA) chief executive officer, Caroline Rhodes, said after 16 years, SA growers were one step closer to having the freedom of choice to grow the same crops as their mainland interstate counterparts.

"This Bill establishes a level playing field for South Australian growers with their mainland interstate counterparts," she said.

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