



The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul D. Ryan
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Harry Reid
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

December 4, 2015

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Reid, Speaker Ryan, and Minority Leader Pelosi:

On behalf of the Coalition for Safe and Affordable Food we urge your support for language in the year-end Omnibus Appropriations bill that addresses the patchwork of state GMO labeling laws that the food and agriculture industries are currently facing. The Coalition includes 45 national trade associations representing farmers, cooperatives, agribusiness, and food, seed, and biotechnology companies. We have been working with over 400 state and local food, agriculture, and retail groups to achieve a uniform national standard for voluntary GMO labeling.

Today interest groups across the country are pushing state-level labeling mandates that will exacerbate consumer confusion and drive up food prices. Instead of informing consumers, these state initiatives are filled with loopholes, exempting as much as two-thirds of foods. The result will be higher food prices for hard working American families – as much as \$500 a year for a family of four, according to a study conducted by Cornell University Professor William Lesser. There were approximately 80 bills introduced in 20 states this year, with laws in Connecticut, Vermont, and Maine already enacted. Vermont's Act 120, which would mandate the labeling of foods made with genetically modified organisms, will take effect in July 2016 and food companies will need to begin implementing labeling changes next month.

Just last month the Food and Drug Administration again affirmed the safety of foods derived from biotech, stating foods from seeds derived from genetic engineering "don't present greater safety concerns than foods developed by traditional plant breeding". GMOs have been an important part of our nation's food supply for the past 20 years, and 70-80 percent of the foods consumed in the United States contain ingredients that have been genetically engineered. In addition, the leading health and regulatory bodies in the world, from the World Health Organization to the American Medical Association, have all concluded GMOs are safe.

It is imperative that Congress take action now to prevent a costly and confusing patchwork of state labeling laws from taking effect next year and spreading across the country. Congress must include language in the Omnibus Appropriations bill to ensure that food companies, farmers, ranchers, and consumers won't face the significant increased costs of state GMO labeling laws.

Sincerely,



AACC International
Agricultural Retailers Association
American Agri-Women
American Bakers Association
American Beverage Association
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Feed Industry Association
American Frozen Food Institute
American Fruit and Vegetable Processors and Growers
Coalition
American Phytopathological Society
American Seed Trade Association
American Soybean Association
American Sugarbeet Growers Association
Biotechnology Industry Organization
Corn Refiners Association
Council for Responsible Nutrition
CropLife America
Flavor & Extract Manufacturers Association
Global Cold Chain Alliance
Grocery Manufacturers Association
Independent Bakers Association
Independent Professional Seed Association
International Dairy Foods Association
International Franchise Association
National Alfalfa & Forage Alliance
National Association of Manufacturers
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Confectioners Association
National Corn Growers Association
National Cotton Council
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Fisheries Institute
National Grain & Feed Association
National Milk Producers Federation
National Oilseed Processors Association
National Potato Council
National Seasoning Manufacturers Association
National Turkey Federation
North American Millers Association
Pet Food Institute
Snack Food Association
U.S. Beet Sugar Association
U.S. Canola Association
U.S. Chamber of Commerce
U.S. Dry Bean Council