

Oppose Amendments Creating Costly & Confusing Food Labels

Vote NO on Sanders #965; Boxer #1025, 1026

We strongly oppose any amendment that would require mandatory special labels for food and beverages that contain ingredients derived from agricultural biotechnology. Regardless of proponents' intentions, a special label would unnecessarily alarm consumers and provide no health or safety benefits. In addition, the significant negative consequences would be evident in reduced agricultural productivity, research, risk management, and environmental protections made possible by the adoption of biotechnology.

Labeling amendments, like the ones introduced by Senators Bernie Sanders (I-VT) and Barbara Boxer (D-CA), will result in costly and extreme food labeling requirements.

Senator Sanders' Amendment No. 965 to S. 954, the *Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act of 2013*, opens the door for states to require thousands of common grocery products be repackaged and relabeled if they contain ingredients derived from biotechnology. This change in U.S. government policy would harm farmers, grocers, food companies and small businesses and the customers they serve by raising food costs and creating burdensome paperwork requirements for businesses.

Senator Boxer's Amendments No. 1025 and 1026 are also troublesome, perpetuating a regrettable misperception that plants bred using precise genetic techniques are somehow dangerous and require special labels of food made using those plants. Amendment No. 1025 would express the Senate's support for mandatory labeling of food and beverages containing ingredients derived from agricultural biotechnology; amendment No. 1026 would divert critical resources away from the U.S. government's regulatory functions for biotechnology-derived plants and animals to conduct a study about mandatory labeling. Neither amendment is scientifically justified.

Whether state or federal in nature, efforts to require mandatory labels for foods and beverages that contain ingredients derived from agricultural biotechnology are not based on science. The U.S. government has a strong regulatory program that helps ensure that all foods are safe to be marketed and labeled appropriately. Three agencies — the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Department of Agriculture (USDA) — conduct a comprehensive, coordinated regulatory review to ensure that foods produced through biotechnology are safe.

FDA's current science-based policy requires labeling only when foods produced through biotechnology are changed in any way relevant to health, safety or nutrition. In addition, FDA has guidelines that companies can use in making voluntary claims regarding products produced with, or without, the use of biotechnology. This and the USDA Organic standards ensure that consumers can make choices based on information that is consistent, truthful and accurate.

The following groups are opposed to Senate GMO Labeling Amendments:

Agricultural Retailers Association
American Bakers Association
American Beverage Association
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Feed Industry Association
American Frozen Food Institute
American Meat Institute
American Seed Trade Association
American Soybean Association
American Veterinary Medical Association
Biotechnology Industry Organization
Global Cold Chain Alliance
Grocery Manufacturers Association
Institute of Shortening and Edible Oils
International Association of Refrigerated Warehouses
International Dairy Foods Association
International Formula Council
North American Meat Association
National Association of Manufacturers
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Chicken Council
National Confectioners Association
National Corn Growers Association
National Cotton Council
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Fisheries Institute
National Grain and Feed Association
National Milk Producers Federation
National Oilseed Processors Association
National Renderers Association
North American Export Grain Association
North American Millers' Association
Shelf-Stable Food Processors Association
Snack Food Association