



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 1250

Resolution calling upon the United States Congress to pass and the President to sign the Biotechnology Food Labeling Uniformity Act, which would require companies to label whether food contains genetically-engineered ingredients

By Council Members Johnson, Kallos and Chin

Whereas, According to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), humans have been modifying crops for thousands of years by repeatedly cross-pollinating plants until the breeder identifies offspring with the desired combination of traits; and

Whereas, Genetically modified organisms (GMOs) can be defined as organisms (i.e. plants, animals or microorganisms) in which the genetic material has been altered in a way that does not occur naturally by mating and/or natural recombination; and

Whereas, Genetically engineered (GE) plants are produced by isolating a gene for a desired trait and adding it to a single plant cell in a laboratory to generate a new plant; and

Whereas, Genetic engineering has been used since the 1990s; and

Whereas, In 2012, GE soybeans accounted for 93 percent of all soybeans planted, and GE corn accounted for 88 percent of corn planted, according to the FDA; and

Whereas, The FDA most recently issued guidance in November 2015 for manufacturers who wish to voluntarily label their products as containing genetically modified ingredients but does not require such labeling; and

Whereas, The FDA also recently approved the first genetically engineered animal intended for food, AquAdvantage Salmon; and

Whereas, Some advocates argue that consumers have a right to know what is in their food and that manufacturers should be required to label food that is genetically engineered; and

Whereas, According to the Center for Food Safety, 64 countries, including the entire European Union, Japan, Australia, Russia and China require food containing genetically modified material to be labeled; and

Whereas, The Biotechnology Food Labeling Uniformity Act (S.2621), introduced by Senator Jeff Merkley, would amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to require food that contains an ingredient from a GMO to be labeled as genetically engineered; and

Whereas, The bill allows four options for labeling that require either identifying each GMO ingredient or including a blanket statement or symbol to indicate that some ingredients are genetically-engineered; and

Whereas, S.2621 would exempt from this requirement food in which GMO ingredients account for less than 0.9 percent of the weight of the food; and

Whereas, The labeling requirements of the bill would preempt state and local labeling requirements; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the United States Congress to pass and the President to sign the Biotechnology Food Labeling Uniformity Act, which would require companies to label whether food contains genetically-engineered ingredients.

CP
LS # 7749
10/7/2016