



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 119

Resolution calling on the New York State legislature to pass and the Governor to sign A.3525-A/S.3835-A, which would require the labeling of food or food products that contain genetically modified material or were produced using genetically modified material.

By Council Members Williams, Maisel, Kallos, Espinal, Mendez, Koslowitz, King and Levin

Whereas, Thanks to advances in biotechnology, scientists are now able to alter the genetic composition of plants and animals using genes from one species to create desirable traits in another; and

Whereas, This sort of genetic engineering has been used, for example, to create herbicide resistant crops; and

Whereas, For example, the United States Food and Drug Administration (“FDA”) is currently considering approving the sale of a genetically modified salmon for human consumption; and

Whereas, Opponents of genetically modified food production believe that this form of biotechnology has not been adequately tested and could have adverse health and environmental effects; and

Whereas, According to the Center for Food Safety, “more than 88 percent of U.S. corn is genetically modified; as are 93 percent of soybeans and 94 percent of cotton;” and

Whereas, The Center for Food Safety also reports that approximately three-quarters of processed foods commonly found in supermarkets contain genetically modified material; and

Whereas, In 1992, the FDA issued a policy statement declaring that foods containing genetically modified material are not required to be labeled as such as long as they are not materially different from their organic counterparts (i.e., the foods look, taste and smell the same); and

Whereas, Sixty-four countries, including the entire European Union, Japan, Australia, Russia and China

require food containing genetically modified material to be labeled as such; and

Whereas, According to a 2011 MSNBC online poll, 96 percent of people surveyed believe that foods with genetically modified material should be labeled; and

Whereas, If passed, A.3525-A/S.3835-A, sponsored by Assembly Member Linda B. Rosenthal and Senator Kenneth P. LaValle, would address this public concern by requiring genetically modified foods and foods made using genetically modified materials to be labeled as such; and

Whereas, Under A.3525-A/S.3835-A, processed food containing less than nine-tenths of one percent of genetically modified materials would not need to provide such labeling, nor would the law apply to animals that ingest any genetically modified food or drugs, prepared food intended for immediate consumption, alcoholic beverages, medical food, food lawfully certified as “organic,” processed food produced with the genetically engineered processing aids and enzymes, and food unintentionally produced with genetically modified material materials; and

Whereas, Failure to comply with the labeling requirements mandated by A.3525-A/S.3835-A could result in a misdemeanor charge; and

Whereas, Greater disclosure is a necessary ingredient for effective consumer protection; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls on the New York State legislature to pass and the Governor to sign A.3525-A/S.3835-A, which would require the labeling of food or food products that contain genetically modified material or were produced using genetically modified material.