



July 17, 2015

Dear Representative,

National Co+op Grocers (NCG) supports consumers' right to information, including sufficient product labeling, so that people can make their own informed purchasing decisions. We strongly oppose The Safe and Accurate Food Labeling Act (H.R. 1599) because it:

1. **Lacks transparency.** H.R. 1599 merely codifies the status quo of *voluntary* labeling. In the 14 years since the FDA has allowed companies to voluntarily label foods that have been produced using genetic engineering, no single company has labeled them as such. Only *mandatory* labeling fulfills consumer demand for transparency regarding GMOs.
2. **Undermines public will.** Multiple surveys have shown that the majority of Americans, regardless of age, income, education, or party affiliation, want GMO foods to be labeled. H.R. 1599 nullifies GMO labeling laws that are already on the books in Vermont, Connecticut and Maine. Furthermore, the bill preempts states by blocking any future state legislation or ballot initiatives that would require GMO labeling. While NCG favors a national solution, we support states' efforts in the absence of federally regulated mandatory labeling.
3. **Heightens consumer confusion.** Newly inserted language would allow food companies to continue to make "natural" claims on foods produced using genetic engineering and would also block state efforts to protect consumers from misleading "natural" claims. Because many consumers believe that "natural" foods are produced without genetically engineered ingredients, H.R. 1599 would only perpetuate consumer confusion in the marketplace.

NCG is a business services cooperative for retail food co-ops located throughout the United States. We represent 143 food co-ops operating over 195 stores in 38 states with combined annual sales of over \$1.7 billion and over 1.3 million consumer-owners. We urge Congress to reject H.R. 1599.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this issue. If you would like more information, please contact NCG Advocacy Specialist [Allie Mentzer](#) (cell: 804-314-6770).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robynn Shrader".

Robynn Shrader
National Co+op Grocers CEO