July 22, 2015

RE: H.R. 1599 – Safe and Accurate Food Labeling Act of 2015

Dear Representative,

On behalf of the undersigned clergymen and social justice leaders, we strongly urge you to oppose the Safe and Accurate Food Labeling Act of 2015, also known as the Deny Americans the Right to Know (DARK) Act.

The DARK Act would sharply limit the number of Americans who have access to information about whether the food they purchase contains genetically engineered (commonly referred to as GMOs) ingredients by relying solely on a voluntary labeling system that has been in place since 2001, but has yielded no new information for consumers.

Specifically, the DARK Act would:

• Preempt all state labeling efforts;
• Make it harder for the Food and Drug Administration to ever require mandatory labeling nationwide;
• Codify the current, broken voluntary labeling system;
• Allow “natural” foods to contain GMO ingredients and preempt state efforts to end misleading “natural” claims;

A 2015 poll found that nearly 90 percent of consumers- regardless of race, age, gender, education or party affiliation- support mandatory GMO food labeling. Even if consumers are not seeking to avoid foods produced with GMOs, Americans want the same rights that consumers in 64 other countries- including the European Union, Brazil, Russia, China and Japan- have to make that decision for themselves and their families.

All too often, access to food is dependent on the neighborhood you live in. Relying solely on a voluntary labeling system means that only consumers who can afford to buy organic, shop at grocery stores that require labeling or live outside food deserts will have access to this information.

The DARK Act will continue to limit the information consumers- especially those in lower income areas- have about the food they buy for themselves and their families and we strongly urge you not to support this bill.

Thank you,

Reverend Dr. Gerald L. Durley, Pastor Emeritus Providence Missionary Baptist Church, Atlanta, GA

Reverend Anthony Motley, Lindsay Street Baptist Church, Atlanta, GA

(Over)
Reverend Timothy McDonald, III, President of the African American Ministers In Action of People for the American Way & Senior Pastor of the First Iconium Baptist Church, Atlanta, GA

Reverend Dr. Darrell Elligan, The True Light Baptist Church, Atlanta, GA

Reverend J. Allen Milner, Chapel-Christian Love Baptist, Atlanta, GA

Reverend Dr. Richard Cobble, Omega Holiness Church, Atlanta, GA

Reverend Eldridge Spearman, Mount Jezreel Baptist Church, Silver Spring, MD

K Rashid Nuri, President and CEO, Truly Living Well, Center for Natural Urban Agriculture, Atlanta, GA