



Testimony for the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee

By Shawn Miller

In OPPOSITION to HB 2532, HB 2175 and HB 3177

The Food and Drug Administration does not require special labeling of a food to identify it as genetically engineered. Much of the food available for purchase in the grocery store is genetically engineered or has genetically engineered ingredients. Requiring special labeling on what are essentially conventionally-produced foods would have little benefit, but would have significant cost that would be passed on to consumers.

In other words, because the majority of food sold in the grocery store is genetically engineered, what could the labeling provisions accomplish? Essentially, the label would notify consumers that the food they are about to purchase was produced much like the majority of the other items for sale in the store. However, unless there is an education campaign to accompany the new labeling requirements, many consumers would not understand the significance of the labels. They would assume that a new label identifying the food as genetically engineered is meant as a warning to consumers. However, there is no scientific evidence showing that food with genetically engineered ingredients has negative health benefits. In fact, there is no evidence showing that such food is qualitatively different than food that is claimed to be without genetic modification.

The proponents argue that people have a right to know what is in their food. NWGA doesn't contest this notion and notes that product labels must include ingredients and nutritional value. Adding whether the product is genetically engineered to the label would suggest to consumers that this information is as significant as the actual ingredients and nutritional value of the produce, when this has not been proven to be the case. In fact, that the product may be genetically engineered has been shown to be insignificant. Allowing the label to include information on genetic engineering in this circumstance would be misleading to customers.

I urge the committee to oppose HB 2532, HB 2175 and HB 3177.