



Reply from Senator Kaine

1 message

U.S. Senator Kaine <senator@kaine.senate.gov>

Thu, Mar 31, 2016 at 11:03 AM

To: [REDACTED]

TIM KAINE
VIRGINIACOMMITTEE ON
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March 31, 2016

Mr. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for contacting me about genetically-engineered or genetically-modified (GMO) foods. I appreciate hearing from you.

I generally believe consumers have a right to know what is in their food. While the World Health Organization has found no evidence to suggest that GMOs are unsafe, there is no reason to deny consumers information about which there is clearly public interest. For that reason, I voted against recent legislation in the Senate sponsored by Senator Pat Roberts that would have preempted states from enacting state-level GMO labeling laws. This bill would have replaced binding state GMO labeling standards - like the one passed last year in Vermont - with a voluntary federal standard, while requiring the U.S. Department of Agriculture to promulgate three new complex federal regulations before any mandatory federal standard could be approved.

This bill was largely written to address the concern that it could be burdensome and expensive to comply with 50 different state-level GMO labeling laws, particularly in areas near the borders of multiple states. I believe this is a reasonable concern. But I don't believe there should be federal preemption of state laws without a mandatory federal law. I am open to different methods of implementing a federal labeling law. I believe there is a more simple way than the Roberts bill for everyone to meet halfway - to allow food companies to follow the same labeling rules nationwide while ensuring that consumers have easy access to the information they want about GMOs.

I am confident that labeling can be done in a fashion that is both business-friendly and consumer-friendly. The Senate continues to negotiate about other GMO labeling proposals, and I will evaluate all such proposals on the criteria of whether they meet the consumer right-to-know in a manner that makes practical logistical sense.

Please know that I will keep your views in mind as Congress continues to debate this issue. Thank you again for contacting me.

Sincerely,

Tim Kaine

