

New GMO labeling bill introduced amidst the approval of a GM apple

By ACSH Staff — February 17, 2015



A new GMO labeling bill [was introduced last week](#) [1], backed by

Senators Barbara Boxer (D-California) and Richard Blumenthal (D-Connecticut), and Representative Peter DeFazio (D-Oregon) and Chef Tom Colicchio, head judge of Bravo's TV show *Top Chef*. Called the *Genetically Engineered Food Right-to-Know Act*, the bill would require that the Food and Drug Administration mandate the labeling of foods that contain GM ingredients by manufacturers.

Currently, Vermont, Maine and Connecticut have passed their own GMO labeling laws. However, according to Claire Parker of the Coalition for Safe Affordable Food, When it comes to food labeling, Americans deserve a national standard that is consistent from state to state, easy to follow and does not lead to higher grocery prices. Unfortunately, the Boxer/DeFazio bill does not create a national labeling standard and would only serve to exacerbate the labeling conundrum by adding a federal mandate and penalties, combined with a patchwork of state laws and regulations. As our readers know, ACSH has long argued that there is absolutely no reason to label GMO products. Our Dr. Gil Ross says, If those companies who want to attract consumers who fear biotech food want to, let them label their products and leave the rest of us alone.

Even Tom Colicchio seems to be on to something when he suggests that the proponents of GMOs spend money educating the public about the virtues of GMOs. This is clearly necessary, as evidenced from an [article in the *NYTimes*](#) [2] earlier this month which found that although a majority of consumers think it's important to know if foods are made with genetically engineered (GMO) ingredients, most are unaware about what's already available in the marketplace, or the lack of relevance of this information.

On another GMO-related note, the US Department of Agriculture's animal and plant health authority [has just approved](#) [3] two GM apple varieties engineered to prevent browning. The apples, developed by the Canadian company Okanagan and called the Arctic Granny and Arctic Golden,

are identical to non-GM apples, except that the fruit will not brown once it is cut open. As expected, the Organic Consumers Association is arguing that these varieties can be harmful to human health and claim that this is just another big experiment on humans for no good reason.

However, as we at ACSH have said numerous times, the science has demonstrated over and over again that such foods are essentially the same as their conventional counterparts. ACSH's Dr. Josh Bloom comments, The Organic Consumers Association is responding predictably: sour grapes over sweet apples.

For scientifically sound information on GMOs and agriculture, see ACSH's publications on the subject available [here](#) [4].

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Links

[1] http://thehill.com/regulation/232607-lawmakers-to-introduce-food-label-bill-with-top-chef-judge#disqus_thread

[2] <http://acsh.org/2015/02/many-consumers-want-gmo-labeling-dont-really-know-much-gmo-foods-ingredients/>

[3] <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/feb/14/canadian-companys-genetically-modified-apples-win-us-approval>

[4] <http://acsh.org/2014/03/agricultural-biotechnology/>