

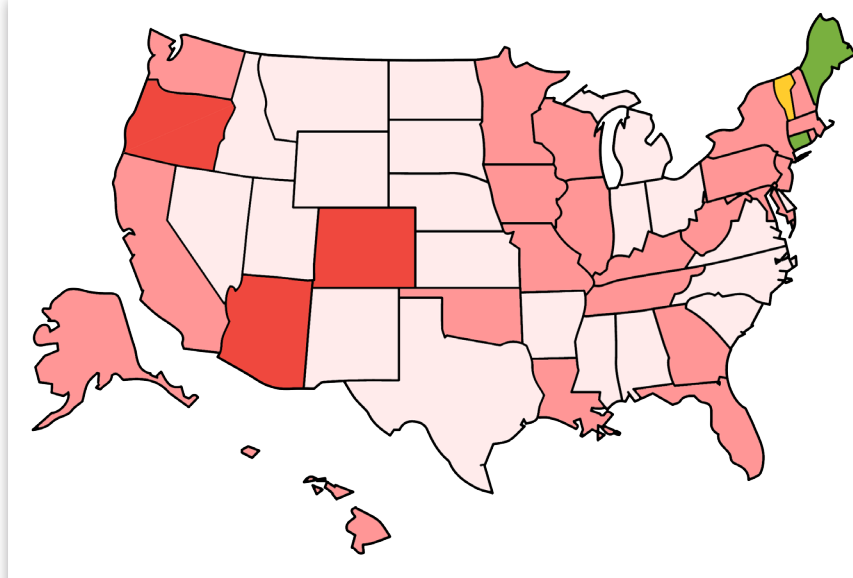


GE FOOD LABELING: STATES TAKE ACTION

IN 2011, CENTER FOR FOOD SAFETY submitted a formal legal petition to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on behalf of over 650 companies and organizations demanding that FDA require the mandatory labeling of genetically engineered (GE) foods. Since it was filed, 55 members of Congress and over 1.4 million people have submitted comments in support of the petition; yet, FDA has failed to take action to require the labeling of GE foods. Because of this, U.S. States have taken the lead in protecting the public's right to know what is in their food. In 2013, Connecticut and Maine passed GE labeling laws, with another in Vermont passing one legislative body. In total, 54 bills were introduced across 26 states, and a Washington State ballot initiative narrowly lost, 51-49%. And the momentum is only growing.

Already in 2014, 33 new GE food labeling bills were introduced in 19 states, with an Oregon ballot initiative also on target for November 2014, bringing the total number of active bills and ballot initiatives to 65 across 26 states.

The international marketplace has long agreed that the labeling of GE foods is proper. Global food policy research conducted by CFS confirms that 64 countries, including the member nations of the European Union and countries as diverse as Russia, China, Brazil, Australia, Turkey, and South Africa, require standards of mandatory GE food labeling.



- passed legislation
- legislation passed in one house
- ballot initiative
- active legislation
- no legislation

THE TOP REASONS TO SUPPORT STATE GE FOOD LABELING LEGISLATION

Consumers have a right to know what they feed their families. Unlabeled GE foods are misleading, and States have a duty to prevent consumer deception by requiring that factual information be disclosed in order to protect their citizenry from such deception. More fundamentally, U.S. courts have recognized a “right-to-know” rooted in the individual rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution and by common law.

States have the legal authority to require labeling to ensure customer understanding. Particularly in the absence of any Federal leadership, States can and should enact legislation requiring GE labeling on behalf of their citizenry. State labeling laws are well supported legally because they are rationally related to numerous state interests, including but not limited to: protecting consumers from misleading products and protecting public health, the environment, and the economy.

FDA’s current labeling policy is unlawfully inconsistent. FDA already requires the labeling of nearly 4,000 ingredients, additives, and processes. Food labels do not depict a “skull and crossbones,” as some may complain, nor are labels required only for foods that have been proven dangerous. In the U.S., we do not label dangerous foods; we take them off the market. In reality, labels provide information to consumers. For instance, whether or not orange juice is from concentrate or whether food has been irradiated are currently communicated to consumers via labels required by FDA.

Voluntary labeling is completely inadequate. Voluntary labeling is not a substitute for mandatory disclosure. It’s been more than 13 years since FDA approved voluntary GE labeling, and exactly zero companies have voluntarily disclosed that their foods were produced through genetic engineering. Markets only work when consumers have the information needed to make informed choices.

Over 90% of Americans support labeling of GE foods. Polls consistently show that over 90% of Americans believe GE foods should be labeled. A recent illustrative poll by the Mellman Group found that not only did over 90% of respondents support labeling, but nearly all Democrats (93% favor, 2% oppose), Independents (90% favor, 5% oppose) and Republicans (89% favor, 5% oppose) favor labeling.

Labeling GE foods will not increase costs to consumers or food manufacturers. According to a recent study by independent food-marketing expert Kai Robertson, changes to a food manufacturer’s product labels have not been found to affect the prices paid by shoppers.

This is largely because food producers regularly, and even weekly, make changes to the labels of their products for marketing or regulatory reasons—without increasing their costs.

STATE	# BILLS
Alaska	2
California	1
Florida	2
Georgia	1
Hawaii	14
Illinois	2
Iowa	2
Kentucky	1
Louisiana	1
Maryland	2
Massachusetts	4
Minnesota	4
Missouri	2
New Hampshire	1
New Jersey	2
New York	4
Oklahoma	1
Pennsylvania	2
Rhode Island	4
Tennessee	3
Vermont	2
Washington	4
West Virginia	1
STATE	BALLOT
Arizona	✓
Colorado	✓
Oregon	✓
TOTAL STATES	TOTAL LEG.
26	65

ACTIVE LEGISLATION

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Call your state representatives to support labeling in your state.
- Tell Congress to support GE food labeling at <http://bit.ly/MyRightToKnow>.