

Senator James Jeffords
728 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

4/22/00

Dear Senator Jeffords,

I am very concerned that I am eating genetically engineered foods without being told that fact. I am writing to request that you co-sponsor S. 2080, the Genetically Engineered Food Right-to-Know Act. This legislation will ensure the right of Americans to know whether the foods we purchase have been genetically altered in any way.

Public opinion polls show the vast majority of Americans want these foods labeled. (81% in a January 11, 1999 Time magazine poll.) Yet the FDA is allowing genetically engineered foods to come to market unlabeled arguing these foods are no different than those produced by typical hybridization. But studies show crops modified by genetic engineering may contain increased levels of natural toxins and lower levels of valuable nutrients.

The FDA states that if a genetically engineered food contains a known allergen it must be labeled. But what about the unknown allergens that may be created in these experimental foods? Genetically engineered crops often contain proteins that have never before been consumed by humans as food. Further, there are serious questions about the environmental safety of these crops. And many people have moral and religious concerns.

Food manufacturers are selling potatoes and corn that have been genetically engineered to contain the Bt toxin (*Bacillus thuringiensis*). The Bt toxin stays in the cell structure of the plants and is deadly enough to kill insects. We are being told that these foods are safe for human consumption, but we have heard that before about DDT, EDB, and many other pesticides later shown to be cancer-causing.

I do not want to eat genetically engineered foods that contain the Bt toxin. Nor do I want to eat "Roundup Ready" soybeans or other future products such as tomatoes that contain the gene from a fish! But without labeling, I cannot avoid it. So I am asking you to become a co-sponsor of the Genetically Engineered Food Right-to-Know Act, S. 2080, which will require the labeling of all genetically engineered foods. Similar labeling legislation has already been passed in Europe, Australia and Japan.

Please write back to me and let me know if you intend to support this important legislation.

Sincerely,

(signature)

Julian A. Tiberio Jr

(print name)

JULIAN A. TIBERIO JR

(address)

17 Derby Road

(city, state, zip)

Watertown, MA 02472

00P-1211

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