



TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO
LD 1257 An Act Regarding Labeling of Genetically Engineered Food Products

Senator Talbot-Ross, Representative Pluecker, and honorable members of the
Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry:

My name is Julie Ann Smith, and I am the Executive Director of the Maine Farmers
Coalition, a collective of progressive farmers deeply committed to ensuring the
sustainable growth and protection of Maine's vital farming industry.

We strongly oppose the proposed legislation. With developments in agri-science and
robust research and development occurring worldwide, the use of genetic engineering
has created numerous advantages for farmers while also keeping food affordable.
Genetic engineering has helped reduce pesticide use by creating disease and pest
resistance, increasing yields, and, perhaps most importantly, improving both mental
and physical human health.¹ It is critical for Maine farmers to have access to and use of
the same technologies and tools that other states and neighboring countries do.

Requiring the labeling of genetically engineered food implies there is something
potentially dangerous with the use of genetic engineering. As we saw with the labeling of
rBST in milk many years ago, such labels create significant consumer confusion and
distrust. There are options for consumers who wish to have information about the use of
genetic engineering that do not require yet another burden on farmers.

Furthermore, we question how the state of Maine will be able to enforce packaging for
food imported from other states or countries. We believe this bill would unfairly target
Maine farmers and create yet another impediment for the commercial sale of the food
we are growing in our state.

¹Smyth SJ. The human health benefits from GM crops. *Plant Biotechnol J.* 2020 Apr;18(4):887-888. doi:
10.1111/pbi.13261. Epub 2019 Oct 2. PMID: 31544299; PMCID: PMC7061863.
<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7061863/>



Thank you for your time and consideration of the impact this bill would have on Maine farms. We would sincerely appreciate a vote of Ought Not to Pass. I would be happy to answer any questions.

