



U.S. Chamber of Commerce

September 12, 2019

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Chairwoman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Shelby, Chairwoman Lowey, Vice Chairman Leahy, and Ranking Member Granger:

As you continue your work on FY 2020 appropriations legislation, we strongly urge you to oppose the inclusion of any provisions related to genetically engineered salmon. Previous appropriations riders on this subject short-circuited the regulatory process to effectively ban the commercialization of an FDA-approved product, resulting in a number of negative effects. First, such riders cast a chilling effect on innovation, potentially hindering development of other products in the research and development pipeline that have the ability to address challenges in agriculture. At the same time, these provisions conflicted with federal food disclosure law and called into question the existing science-based regulatory system that Congress can circumvent and undermine. Provisions like these have great potential to cost jobs, harm small businesses, and undermine regulatory certainty.

Of equal if not greater concern, the previous provision created uncertainty regarding the broader disclosure of bioengineered food ingredients. Recent actions by FDA and USDA have ensured this product is consistently disclosed for consumer awareness under the National Bioengineered Food Disclosure Law (the "Disclosure Act"), thus resolving the issue. We would urge Congress not to reopen this matter.

In 2016, Congress enacted the Disclosure Act, a bipartisan effort to require the disclosure of bioengineered foods in a meaningful way that informs consumers while not hindering the use of biotechnology in agriculture. One of the objectives of creating this national, mandatory system was to avoid an unworkable patchwork of state and local disclosure requirements. By carving out specific products from that disclosure system, as the previous appropriations rider did, not only was Congress fostering consumer confusion but was in effect creating the precedent for a product-by-product patchwork, thus undermining the goals of the Disclosure Act. To ensure disclosure clarity for consumers and food producers, we urge Congress to avoid provisions aimed at undermining the consistency offered by the Disclosure Act.

We appreciate your attention to this important matter, and your work to ensure that the Disclosure Act can provide meaningful information to consumers and that innovation in agriculture is not impeded.

Sincerely,

Agricultural Retailers Association
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Feed Industry Association
American Seed Trade Association
American Soybean Association
Animal Health Institute
Biotechnology Innovation Organization
Corn Refiners Association
National Aquaculture Association
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Corn Growers Association
National Grain and Feed Association
National Oilseed Processors Association
National Milk Producers Federation
National Renderers Association
U.S. Canola Association
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