

The US Senate's "DARK Act" Would Cause America's Crop Fields to Be Saturated with Cancer-Causing Glyphosate (Monsanto Roundup)

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A bill pending before the U.S. Senate would not just deny consumers the right to know whether their food contains genetically modified organisms (GMOs), it could also strip states of their right to limit or regulate the use of dangerous herbicide chemicals widely sprayed over fields of GMO crops.

The bill in question, which passed a vote in the House of Representatives of July 22, is formally known as H.R. 1599, the Safe and Accurate Food Labeling Act, but has come to be known by organic and natural foods advocates as the Deny Americans the Right to Know (DARK) Act. That's because far from ensuring accurate food labeling, the bill is actually designed to prevent the implementation of mandatory GMO labeling laws.

Bans any GMO labeling with teeth

A clear response by the GMO industry to the recent passage of mandatory labeling law in Vermont, the DARK Act would ban state governments from adopting any law involving the labeling of GMO foods. It would ban private GMO-free labels. It would even ban the federal government - specifically, the FDA - from adopting any mandatory labeling rule.

Instead, the DARK Act would institute a voluntary GMO labeling effort administered by the federal government. Under that scheme, food producers would need to pay the government to have their food labeled "GMO free." Companies that did not want their food labeled GMO free - including all those making food with GMOs, of course - would pay nothing.

"And why should the burden of labeling fall on the producers of non-GMO foods, when the risk factor is associated with those foods that do contain [GMOs](#)?" asked the Organic Consumers Association in response.

It should come as no surprise that the GMO industry-backed bill is packaged in deceptive language. The industry-funded front group behind the bill, the "Coalition for Safe and Affordable Food," was directly lying to members of Congress, telling them that mandatory [GMO](#) labeling would cost individual U.S. consumers \$500 per year in increased food costs. But that statistic comes from only a single study, paid for by the Council for Biotech Information, whose members include Monsanto. That study has been repeatedly debunked by independent research.

Bans regulation of toxic chemicals?

While most coverage of the DARK Act has focused on its impacts on GMO labeling, the law contains another, even more sinister provision: It bans states or counties from passing any laws regulating GMO crops at all. That might mean the federal government could try to block states from regulating the herbicides sprayed on GMO fields – proven toxic chemicals such as glyphosate (Roundup) and 2,4-D that have been linked to cancer, hormonal problems, suppressed immune function and Parkinson’s disease.

Because most GMO crops are engineered to be resistant to these herbicides, the chemicals are sprayed in enormous quantities across the 72 percent of U.S. cropland (228 million acres) that are planted with GMOs. This includes fields within a stone’s throw of schools, churches and other residential areas – to say nothing of the effects exposure to these poisons has on farm workers or on the consumers who eat GMO crops.

The [DARK Act](#) could be used to undercut efforts to protect all these people from the effects of this chemical violence.

If the DARK Act does become law, it is probably headed straight for court. That’s because the law is blatantly unconstitutional, infringing on states’ rights to regulate [food](#) and agriculture within their borders.

“Whatever your views on GMOs, there is no Constitutional justification for the federal government to preempt state laws in this area,” the Campaign for Liberty said. “There certainly is no justification for Congress to preempt private sector efforts to meet consumer demands for non-GMO foods, while allowing those who support the use of GMOs to do so.”

Sources:

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www.organicconsumers.org

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