

March 15, 2016

The Honorable  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Full Senate:

As the Senate considers the substitute amendment #3450 to S. 764 by Chairman Pat Roberts (R-Kan.) for the Biotech Labeling Solutions Act (S. 2609), you have a vitally important vote that will dictate the future of consumer choice and the fate of American farmers. A vote against this measure is a vote against consumers, against American farmers and ranchers, and against more affordable, productive agriculture.

Nearly 800 organizations from all 50 states that represent the entire American food supply chain support this measure.

Failure to act will increase food costs for the average consumer. Inaction will stifle future agricultural innovation. The issue of biotech labeling is the most significant issue that the agriculture and food industry has faced in years. The GMO labeling ballot initiatives and legislative efforts that many state lawmakers and voters are facing are geared to make people wrongly fear what they're eating and feeding their children. They ignore science and undermine the public's understanding of the many benefits of biotechnology in feeding a growing population – and keeping costs down.

The variety of innovative options farmers and ranchers have in how they grow our food is one of the reasons U.S. consumers enjoy a diversity of foods that are also the most affordable in the world. Farm Bureau supports all production practices – and commonsense, science-based regulations – that ensure our consumers are receiving the safest and healthiest food possible. But we will stand adamantly opposed to those who want to take tools and technologies away from American farmers, and affordable choices away from consumers.

The food industry has made a good faith effort to come to a compromise that will provide more information to consumers in a way that doesn't stigmatize a perfectly safe and useful practice. The options presented in the Roberts proposal provide a whole host of options to disclose information to the American public.

As the Senate votes on this important measure, the American Farm Bureau Federation would like to emphasize the critical need for this legislation. Ensuring passage of the Biotech Labeling Solutions Act is a priority issue for Farm Bureau.

Action is required now. Vermont's law is looming, and companies must make labeling decisions soon. The Senate must act on this legislation before the break, and a vote is set for tomorrow. A vote against cloture on this important issue is a vote to kill the bill. The American Farm Bureau

Federation and our nearly six million members implore you to vote YES on cloture and vote YES on the Roberts substitute. With so much agreement on the need to address this serious problem, it is inexcusable that Congress would sit by as our modern food supply is thrown into disarray and costs rise unnecessarily for consumers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Zippy Duvall", enclosed within a thin black rectangular border.

Zippy Duvall  
President  
American Farm Bureau Federation