HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. HJ0001

Labeling for genetically engineered items.

Sponsored by: Joint Agriculture, State and Public Lands & Water Resources Interim Committee

A JOINT RESOLUTION

for

A JOINT RESOLUTION requesting Congress to enact legislation reaffirming the United States Food and Drug Administration as the primary authority in uniform food labeling related to genetic engineering.

WHEREAS, for the purposes of this resolution the term "genetically engineered" is intended to include the terms "biogenetic organism" and "genetically modified organism"; and

WHEREAS, foods produced with genetically engineered ingredients are as safe to eat and grow as foods produced without genetically engineered ingredients as found by many of the most influential regulatory agencies and organizations in the world that study the safety of food products, including the United States Food and Drug

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Administration, the American Medical Association, the World Health Organization, Health Canada, the United States Department of Agriculture, the National Academy of Sciences, United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization and the European Food Safety Authority; and

WHEREAS, genetically engineered technology provides desirable traits from nature and establishes the potential for nutritional, health, agronomic and environmental benefits; and

WHEREAS, genetic modification of crops has existed since man began cultivating crops and genetically engineered technology has been safely used to produce food products for the past twenty-five (25) years; and

WHEREAS, approximately seventy percent (70%) to eighty percent (80%) of the foods consumed in the United States, both at home and away from home, contain genetically engineered ingredients or are genetically engineered as a whole product; and
WHEREAS, a patchwork of local and state mandatory labeling laws and regulations will force costly changes to manufacturing, labeling, warehousing, inventory and distribution channels. Manufacturers and retailers will have to make immediate and consequential changes to their businesses to comply with new labeling requirements. Testing to determine if products are exempt, relabeling or reformulating products with specifically handled, higher-priced ingredients and maintaining separate production runs, state specific tracking units, segregated warehousing, trucking and other logistical complexities will result in higher food prices; and

WHEREAS, a national solution is needed that will protect consumers by eliminating confusion, advancing food safety and providing for the free trade of commerce among the states; and

WHEREAS, a national solution will eliminate the confusion and uncertainty of a fifty (50) state patchwork of genetically engineered safety and labeling laws and affirm the Food and Drug Administration as the nation's authority
for the use and labeling of genetically modified foods and food ingredients; and

WHEREAS, a national solution will require the Food and Drug Administration to conduct a safety review of all new genetically engineered ingredients before they are introduced into commerce. The Food and Drug Administration will be required to mandate the labeling of genetically engineered food ingredients if the agency determines there is a health, safety or nutrition issue with the genetically engineered ingredient; and

WHEREAS, a national solution will inform consumers through federal standards established by the Food and Drug Administration for companies that choose to voluntarily label their products for the absence or presence of genetically engineered food ingredients so that consumers clearly understand their choices in the marketplace; and

WHEREAS, a national solution will provide consistency in that the Food and Drug Administration will define the term "natural" for its use on food and beverage products so that food and beverage companies and consumers have a consistent
legal framework that will guide food labels and inform consumer choice.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WYOMING:

Section 1. That Congress of the United States enact bipartisan legislation that reaffirms the Food and Drug Administration as the primary authority in uniform food labeling related to genetic engineering, based on scientific standards regarding health, safety and nutrition.

Section 2. That existing Food and Drug Administration labeling rules and guidance, as well as the United States Department of Agriculture's National Organic Program, provide sufficient standards to address consumer interest in food production practices through the use of truthful and nonmisleading voluntary labeling.

Section 3. That the Commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration adopt policies, regulations and rules
setting standards to address consumer interest in food production practices through voluntary labeling.

Section 4. That the Wyoming Secretary of State transmit copies of this resolution to the President of the United States, to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress, to the Wyoming Congressional Delegation and to the Commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration.

(END)