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## Written Testimony to the House Rules Committee regarding HB 4100

February 12, 2014

Dear members of the House Rules Committee:

On behalf of Oregon Tilth, I am writing to express our support of HB 4100.

Oregon Tilth is a nonprofit, membership-based organization that supports and promotes sustainable agriculture through education, research, advocacy and certification. Oregon Tilth is accredited by the USDA to offer organic certification services in accordance with the federal National Organic Program. Oregon Tilth currently certifies over 1400 operations of diverse sizes and production types across the U.S. We're well-balanced between certification of farms and handlers, which gives us a unique perspective on the entire food supply chain from seed to table. For 30 years, we've been offering organic certification throughout the supply chain, *ensuring transparency and protecting consumer trust* in the organic label.

Our members represent consumers who are committed to transparency in the food system. In the past decade, we've seen an increasing level of "food literacy" among eaters. People are more interested than ever in the story behind their food: What were the growing and handling practices? Where was it grown and processed? What were the working conditions of farm laborers?

Studies show that more than 90% of Americans support mandatory labeling of genetically engineered (GE) foods<sup>1</sup>. Yet for 20 years, we have been denied that right. While individual reasons for wanting to know what's in our food may vary, what unifies this large majority of eaters is the belief that it's our right to know. Without labeling of GE foods, consumers cannot make informed choices about their food.

Currently, 64 countries around the world require labeling of GE foods. Unlike most other developed countries – such as 15 nations in the European Union, Japan, Australia, Brazil, Russia and even China – the U.S. currently has no laws requiring labeling of genetically engineered foods. Farmers and food manufacturers have been able to comply with GE labeling requirements in other countries without a notable increase in the cost of food.

**Oregon has an opportunity to be a leader in supporting consumers' right to know. Let's give voters the opportunity to vote on GE labeling. We encourage you to support HB 4100.**

Thanks in advance for your consideration.

Chris Schreiner  
Executive Director, Oregon Tilth

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<sup>1</sup> ABC News, June 2011