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To: Members of the House Rules Committee
From: Rhett Lawrence, Oregon Chapter Sierra Club
Date: February 12, 2014
RE: House Bill 4100

Chair Hoyle and Members of the Committee: Good afternoon, my name is Rhett Lawrence and I'm the Conservation Director for the Oregon Chapter of the Sierra Club. On behalf of our more than 20,000 members and supporters in the state, I am pleased to provide some brief testimony in support of House Bill 4100.

This bill would require that products containing genetically engineered (GE) ingredients to be labeled in a clear and conspicuous manner and would create a legislative referral to allow Oregon citizens to affirm the tenets of this legislation in the November 2014 election. The Sierra Club believes that the citizens of Oregon should have the right to know whether the products they are considering are genetically engineered, and then have the ability to make a conscious decision whether they want to purchase those products.

As you may know, genetically engineered foods are not required to be labeled under any federal laws or regulations. We would argue that, in the absence of any requirements at the federal level, we in Oregon have a duty to the citizens of our state to provide them with this important information, and HB 4100 would do just that. The Sierra Club does have concerns about the potential impacts of GE foods on our environment and on public health, but this is also fundamentally a right-to-know bill that will allow consumers to make informed choices about the products they purchase.

In conclusion, the Oregon Chapter of the Sierra Club is strongly in favor of HB 4100's directives to allow Oregonians to vote to affirm their support for the requirement that GE foods be labeled in our state. This is common-sense legislation that deserves the support of this committee and the Oregon Legislature and we urge you to vote Yes on HB 4100. Thank you for considering my comments and I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have.