

Northwest Food Processors Opposes HB 4122 A

Food labeling is best handled at the Federal level

Established in 1914, Northwest Food Processors Association (NWFPA) supports the needs of the Pacific Northwest food processing industry in Idaho, Oregon and Washington. Membership includes some of the foremost brand names in the food industry in the United States, key producers of private label and institutional products, and locally run family businesses. NWFPA is one of the nation's largest food processing trade associations, with more than 500 member companies including 154 food processors and 357 suppliers.

HB 4122 A requires that Genetically Engineered (GE) fish for sale in Oregon must be labeled. NWFPA opposes this legislation and does not think this law is necessary. Forcing some fish processors who choose to use GE fish to label their products may give their competitors an unfair advantage in the market place.

HB 4122 A Conflicts with Existing Nationwide Food Labeling Standards:

- The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is responsible for creating national labeling standards. Currently, the FDA is creating labeling guidelines for GE fish for all 50 states.
- Consumers deserve consistent and reliable food labels regardless of the state in which the food is purchased. A state-by-state approach does not provide reliable and consistent information to consumers.

HB 4122 A Would Create Confusion to Consumers:

- National food standards mandate food makers label their product when there is a material difference or a food safety concern, such as allergens. A mandatory label for GE fish may give the impression the product is not safe to consume for similar reasons. When in fact there is no allergen concern or food safety issue.

FDA Scientific Research Concludes GE Fish are Safe:

- According to the FDA, "the FDA determined that food from AquAdvantage Salmon is as safe to eat and as nutritious as food from other non-GE Atlantic salmon and that there are no biologically relevant differences in the nutritional profile of AquAdvantage Salmon compared to that of other farm-raised Atlantic salmon." Furthermore, this product has passed a rigorous scientific review over 20 years and it's been concluded it does not pose any human health and environmental concerns.

Voluntary GE Food Labels Work:

- Consumers rely on labels that identify GE free foods and are willing to pay the increase price associated with those products. Requiring labels for GE fish only sold in Oregon adds confusion to the current system that labels the *absence* of these foods.

Background on AquAdvantage® Salmon

U.S. Food and Drug Administration last November approved AquaBounty Technologies' application for AquAdvantage® Salmon, an Atlantic salmon that reaches market size more quickly than non-GE farm-raised, only after a scientifically exhaustive and rigorous review that spanned 20 years. In approving the application, FDA determined that food from AquAdvantage® Salmon is as safe to eat and as nutritious as food from ANY other Atlantic salmon and that there are no biologically relevant differences in the nutritional profile of AquAdvantage® Salmon compared to that of other Atlantic salmon. FDA also determined that the AquAdvantage® Salmon did not represent a risk to the environment.

Under the terms of the FDA approved permit, the AquAdvantage® Salmon may only be raised in land-based, contained tanks inside two specific facilities in Canada and Panama, which will be inspected and approved by FDA prior to use. **The approval does not allow AquAdvantage® Salmon to be bred or raised in the United States. In fact, under the product's approval, no other facilities or locations in the United States or elsewhere are authorized for breeding or raising AquAdvantage® Salmon that are intended for marketing as food to U.S. consumers.** Furthermore, AquAdvantage® Salmon are all-female, sterile Atlantic salmon. There will be additional geothermal and physical barriers that render the possibility of survival outside the facility virtually impossible.

In December, Congress included a provision in the Fiscal Year 2016 federal spending package that was enacted last December prohibiting FDA from allowing the introduction or delivery for introduction into interstate commerce of any food that contains GE salmon, until the agency publishes final labeling guidelines for informing consumers of such content. On January 29, FDA issued an import alert informing its employees that per Congress' direction GE salmon not be permitted into the country until the agency finalizes labeling guidelines, a process that typically takes two years.

Since there is zero likelihood GE salmon will be sold in Oregon for AT LEAST the next TWO years and labeling is best addressed at the federal level - so as to avoid a state by state patchwork.

Please vote NO on HB 4122 A