

April 5, 2015

James T. Kirk
1701 Enterprise Way
Federation, WA 98001

Dear Mr. Kirk,

Thank you for taking the time to voice your concerns about GMO foods and share your support for House Bill 2637, requiring foods sold in Washington to be labeled if they contain GMO ingredients. I would like to let you know I share your worries, and support the intent of the legislation. The safety of GMO foods has yet to be tested in any rigorous form, and as a result their impact on public health has not been measured. Labeling foods containing GMO ingredients is the first step to developing a reliable means of testing their effects and putting control back in the hands of consumers.

Although I strongly support the intent behind HB 2637, I have several concerns about the cost and effectiveness of the bill in its current form. First, it would hold the Washington State Department of Agriculture responsible for enforcing GMO labeling. Food labeling, however, is typically handled by the federal Food and Drug Administration. Several other states have pursued similar policies to HB 2637, but because of the federal government's role in food labeling, these laws have met opposition in federal courts. HB 2637 is estimated to cost \$1.5 million to implement, which does not include the cost of potential court challenges like those other states have faced. I am committed to improving information about the food we put on our tables. I believe we can and must find an effective approach that will protect consumers without bogging the state down in costly lawsuits with the federal government.

As a member of the House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources, I am working hard to resolve these concerns. I will do my best to fight for an improved form of HB 2637 that addresses these issues. The bill is scheduled for a public hearing on April 14th, 2015 at 8:00 AM. The hearing will be held in the John L. O'Brien Building, in House Hearing Room B, and you are welcome to attend if you are able.

Thank you again for writing to me about HB 2637. I take your concerns to heart and always appreciate hearing from constituents in the 51st District. Please don't hesitate to contact my office again at any time.

Sincerely,

Representative Amanda Grayson Spock
51st Legislative District