

To the editor, *Mount Desert Islander*, Bar Harbor, ME (October 6, 2015)

## **Monsanto Exposed**

Don't worry! Cigarettes are not harmful to your health. Those hazardous-to-your-health warning labels should be prohibited. Just have a smoke and think no more about it.

We all know the story of the tobacco industry's decades of lying about what it knew concerning the carcinogenic and deliberately addictive properties of its product. And now it's happening again with another product.

Next Wednesday (October 21), the Senate Agriculture Committee will take up a bill passed last July in the House known as The DARK Act. It's an act pushed by another industry giant with a powerful lobby. And it turns out that that industry, just like the tobacco industry, has been lying for decades about the so-called safety of its products. And it doesn't want those products labeled.

After long effort, a couple of research scientists have finally managed to extract from the EPA 15,000 pages of decades-old hidden research records. These are the records of Monsanto Corp's own 1970s/80s research into the toxicity and health risks of glyphosate, the main ingredient in its famous weed-killer, Roundup. Monsanto originally submitted these records to obtain EPA approval, and then had them locked away as "trade secrets."

In the following decades, Roundup's glyphosate has come to be used everywhere, and is found everywhere -- in our soil, water, air, human tissue. Monsanto insists it is both safe and quickly biodegradable.

Uh, well, no. It turns out to be neither.

Those research records reveal that Monsanto found a wide variety of tumors and life-threatening diseases in their animal studies, and that the "inert" ingredients in Roundup added to the toxicity. The only way Monsanto could cover this up was to pull in outside data of sick animals from unrelated studies to use as "controls" to mask undesirable results. Their research also discovered that in many cases lower doses -- doses far below government limits -- had a greater effect than higher doses. Monsanto's response? Limit further studies in such cases to higher doses, claiming that testing lower doses was unnecessary.

Why is this related to The DARK Act that's coming up for a Senate hearing?

Because The DARK Act aims to prohibit the labeling of GMO (genetically engineered) foods. The largest percentage of GMO crops are designed to be immune to Roundup's glyphosate, so that large quantities of the weed-killer can be applied, killing everything but the GMO crop. But when this happens, it is absorbed into the plant. It cannot be washed off.

So most of the GMO foods you eat have been sprayed with Roundup. You may or may not have seen, or been convinced by, the many scientific studies that indicate GMOs are potentially hazardous to your health in and of themselves. Of course, Monsanto says they're safe, just like

they say Roundup is safe. But the dangers of Roundup's glyphosate, which has already been declared a probable human carcinogen by the World Health Organization, are clear.

So if you want to avoid Roundup, the best way to do this is to avoid GMO foods. But you can't do this if they aren't labeled. That's why The DARK Act, which prohibits states from requiring labeling, is hazardous to your health.

Call Senators King (202-224-5344) and Collins (202-224-2523) and ask them to oppose the anti-GMO-labeling DARK Act, whether it's a separate bill or tucked into some unrelated legislation.

Dick Atlee