

To the Editor, *Mount Desert Islander*, Bar Harbor, ME.

Darker DARK Act

Monsanto and Big Food are relentless. They never give up. After numerous Senate defeats in trying to pass their hide-the-GMOs DARK Act, they're back again. This time it's a "compromise" version worse than all the others, deliberately mistitled a "mandatory labeling" bill.

The main point of this bill is to kill any existing or future state GMO labeling laws, not only Maine's, but particularly Vermont's, which is scheduled to go into effect July 1. The "compromise" labeling part of the bill is carefully designed to make any information about GMOs in a food as hard to access as possible.

To label a food which contains GMO-based ingredients, manufacturers have the following choices:

- * a smartphone-scannable QR code. If you don't have a smartphone, like one-third of the population (or half the rural population, or three-quarters of seniors), well, you're outta luck. Got a smartphone but can't get a signal? Tough.

- * an 800-number. Don't have a phone (or a signal) in the store? Sorry.

- * a link to a website. Even if you have a smartphone or carry your tablet/laptop in the grocery store, are you going to type in that link for every product you consider buying?

The only text allowed on a food package will be "Scan here [or Call] for more food information."

No alternative reference to GMO content is permitted.

Failure to do such labeling is a "prohibited act." But there are no consequences specified for violations. The government is forbidden from recalling any food that fails to do such labeling.

Restaurants and "very small" (?) manufacturers are excluded.

Even if you can manage those options, you probably still won't know what you're eating. The law only covers GMOs made using recombinant DNA, the most obsolete method of genetic engineering. There are newer, equally problematic methods that won't be labeled. And the Ag Secretary (long in bed with Monsanto) has 2 long years to come up with an as-yet-unknown definition of "how much GMO" triggers the labeling requirement.

If you don't care about GMOs, you didn't need this bill in the first place. If you do care, contact Senators King and Collins (202-224-5344 and 2523) about this imminent threat.

Dick Atlee