

Open Letter to Members of the Organic Trade Association:

Please Cancel Your Membership in Solidarity with Consumers Betrayed by the OTA on GMO Labeling

Dear OTA Member,

We, the undersigned organizations and businesses who represent millions of U.S. consumers, ask that you withdraw from the Organic Trade Association, or as we prefer to call it, the Organic “Traitors” Association.

Rather than stand with the 90-plus percent of Americans who want clear, on-[package] labels on foods containing GMOs, the OTA conspired with Sens. Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.) and Pat Roberts (R-Kan.) to help the biotech and junk food industries pass what is widely known as the DARK—Deny Americans the Right to Know—Act.

Passage of the DARK Act permanently legalizes food companies’ ability to hide GMO ingredients from consumers.

After years of fighting for the basic right to know about GMOs, the GMO labeling movement was on the verge of winning. The courts had declared Vermont’s mandatory GMO labeling law constitutional. On July 1, more than two years after it was unanimously passed by Vermont lawmakers, the law took effect. Major food brands had already begun labeling their products as “contains genetically engineered ingredients” or “produced with genetic engineering.”

The U.S. Senate, under tremendous pressure from the Grocery Manufacturers Association, was struggling to pass a federal law that would preempt Vermont's law with anything less than mandatory, on-package labeling—until the OTA got involved.

In a purely self-serving move, OTA Executive Director Laura Batcha, and board chair Missy Hughes (who also serves as general counsel for Organic Valley), with support from Organic Valley CEO George Siemon, endorsed the Stabenow-Roberts DARK Act. Why? Because powerful members of the OTA, and multinational food corporations selling so-called “natural foods” do not want the public to know what's in their non-organic brands. And so certified organic products could make a label claim that they are GMO-free.

OTA's endorsement was all Stabenow and Roberts needed in order to get the DARK Act passed, nullify the Vermont law, and deprive consumers of the right to know if their food contains GMOs. The bill continues to be sold to the public by the OTA and its allies as a “federal mandatory GMO labeling solution.” It is anything but. The DARK Act exempts most of the most commonly used GMO ingredients; it allows companies to hide information about GMOs behind confusing and discriminatory electronic QR codes; and it contains no enforcement mechanism and imposes no penalties for non-compliance.

The OTA leadership, knowingly and willfully, betrayed the consumers who support the brands who make up OTA's membership. We ask that OTA members stand in solidarity with health-conscious and environmentally

concerned consumers and immediately withdraw their membership from the
OTA.

A full list of current OTA members can be found here.

<https://www.ota.com/membership/ota-members>

Alliance for Natural Health
Berkshire Organics, LLC
Better Life Whole Foods
Biosafety Alliance
Birchwood Cafe
Cedar Circle Farm
Center for Food Safety
Chop Wood Carry Water Farm
Citizens for GMO Labeling
Community Food and Justice Coalition
ConnFACT (Connecticut Families Against Chemical Trespass)
Coos Head Food Co-Op
Cornucopia Institute
Ecology Party of Florida
Family Farm Defenders
Food & Water Watch
Food Democracy Now!
Food For Thought Inc.
Genesis Farm
GMO Action Alliance
GMO Free AZ
GMO Free CT
GMO Free FL
GMO Free ID
GMO Free NJ
GMO Free NY
GMO Free TN
GMO Free USA
High Country Gardens
Ikerd, John, Professor Emeritus of Agricultural Economics
Illinois Right to Know GMO
Institute for Responsible Technology
LabelGMOs.org
Liddle, Richard and Robin

Lifequest Wellness Center
Living Earth Natural Food & Supp. Ctr
MA Right To Know GMOs
March Against Monsanto
March Against Monsanto - Minneapolis chapter
March Against Monsanto - Nashville chapter
Mercola
Moms Across America
Monk's Cafe
National Health Freedom Coalition
Nature's Pantry
NH Right to Know GMO
NoGMO4Michigan
Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (NODPA)
Ocean Beach People's Organic Food Market
Organic Consumers Association
Organic Seed Growers and Trade Association (OSGATA)
Our Family Farms
Purple Dragon Co-op
Rainbow Natural Grocery Cooperative, MS
Regeneration Vermont
Riddle, Jim, former NOSB chair and owner of Blue Fruit Farm
Right To Know - MN
Round River Farm
South Jersey Seed Circle Library
The Health Nut, LLC
Trumble Co. Bee Keepers
Trumble Co. Herb Society
U.S. Right to Know
Wellness Center at Post Haste