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Reply from Senator Kaine

U.S. Senator Kaine <senator@kaine.senate.gov>

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TIM KAINE
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COMMITTEE ON
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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4607

COMMITTEE ON
FOREIGN RELATIONS

COMMITTEE ON
THE BUDGET

SPECIAL COMMITTEE
ON AGING

October 29, 2015

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Thank you for contacting me about genetically-engineered or genetically-modified (GM) foods. I appreciate hearing from you.

Farmers have been growing GM crops like corn and soybeans for some time. At this time, there is no federal law requiring producers to label GM foods or foods containing GM ingredients. Supporters of GM food labeling argue that consumers have a right to know what ingredients are in their food and if any of those ingredients raise health or environmental concerns. Opponents argue that labeling GM foods is misleading because it implies a warning about health effects when no significant health differences between GM and non-GM foods have been detected, according to the World Health Organization and the American Medical Association.

Several pieces of legislation related to the labeling of GM crops and ingredients have been introduced in the House and Senate. On February 12th, 2015, Senator Barbara Boxer introduced the Genetically-Engineered Food Right-to-Know Act, which would require the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to clearly label GM foods. This bill has been referred to Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions. On March 25th, 2015, Representative Mike Pompeo introduced the Safe and Accurate Food Labeling Act, which would grant the FDA sole authority to label GM foods should they be proven unsafe. On July 23rd, 2015, the House of Representatives passed the Safe and Accurate Food Labeling Act, which is now awaiting consideration by the Senate Agriculture Committee.

As Congress considers legislation, it is critical to balance concerns for safety with policies that encourage innovation. I believe we should closely study the potential health and environmental risks of new GM products before they are grown by farmers or sold at the grocery store. At the same time, we should keep in mind that many of the foods we consume today are the product of countless years of agricultural modification. We should exercise appropriate caution in examining modified foods but should not jump to conclusions based on suspicion not backed by scientific proof.

I will be certain to keep your views in mind should the Senate consider legislation affecting GM food or labeling. Again, thank you for contacting me.

Sincerely,

Tim Kaine

U.S. Senator Kaine <senator@kaine.senate.gov>

Fri, Oct 30, 2015 at 1:24 AM

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