



U.S. Chamber of Commerce

April 12, 2021

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairwoman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Vice Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Leahy, Chairwoman DeLauro, Vice Chairman Shelby, and Ranking Member Granger:

As the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations begin their work on the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 appropriations legislation including the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies (Agriculture) Appropriations bill, we write to express our strong support for the inclusion of language that will ensure the FY 2022 Agriculture Appropriations bill is aligned with the National Bioengineered Food Disclosure Standard (Disclosure Standard).

COVID-19 has exposed the vulnerabilities and inequalities in our capacity to respond to crises, our ability to maintain our supply chains, and to withstand an economic

downturn. These challenges will only grow more prevalent in the face of a growing world and the impact of climate change.

To meet these challenges, it is crucial to lead with science and U.S. innovation. We must incentivize the adoption of innovative, sustainable technologies and practices; and streamline and expedite regulatory pathways for breakthrough technology solutions. Deployment of cutting-edge technologies will enable U.S. agriculture to combat climate change while producing enough food, feed, fuel, and fiber for a growing world.

Unfortunately, appropriations riders, in previous fiscal years, related to bioengineered salmon have undermined the regulatory process. First, by banning the domestic commercialization of a product approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) after a comprehensive and rigorous review process. Then by imposing a labeling requirement that conflicts with the Disclosure Standard, a bipartisan federal law passed nearly five years ago to establish a uniform disclosure standard for all bioengineered foods.

These types of appropriations provisions have a chilling effect on innovation across industry, discouraging research and development in new technologies that address a myriad of challenges in agriculture and food production. Most recently, Sec. 778 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 mandated that the term “genetically engineered” be disclosed in product labels prior to the salmon’s acceptable market name, despite the fact that these food products already are required to bear a disclosure pursuant to the Disclosure Act. The inclusion of such language therefore is unnecessary and redundant and creates confusion for consumers as well as industry. In addition, it directly conflicts with the Disclosure Standard and undermines implementation of the law as well as the regulatory expertise of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and FDA.

We remain opposed to the inclusion of language in the FY 2022 Agriculture Appropriations bill that unfairly targets bioengineered salmon. Instead, we respectfully ask the committees to include language that requires foods containing bioengineered salmon to bear the term “bioengineered,” consistent with the text disclosure set forth in the Disclosure Standard. Such a requirement will provide a clear labeling disclosure, informing consumers of the salmon’s bioengineered content, as past appropriations language seeks, and ensure consistency with the Disclosure Standard.

Further, we are adamantly opposed to the inclusion of any other provision in appropriations legislation that would target any other biotechnology product by imposing disclosures beyond those already required by the Disclosure Standard. Doing so will further undermine the intent and implementation of the Disclosure Standard and cause even greater confusion among consumers regarding disclosures for bioengineered foods.

Supporting science and innovation has helped the world combat COVID-19 and begin to recover from the pandemic. We must ensure that policy continues to support pioneering technology breakthroughs and provides a clear path to market to confront the looming challenges that lie ahead of us.

We look forward to working with you and thank you for your attention to this important matter as you consider the FY 2022 appropriations legislation.

Sincerely,

Agricultural Retailers Association
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Feed Industry Association
American Seed Trade Association
American Soybean Association
Animal Health Institute
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges
Biotechnology Innovation Organization
Corn Refiners Association
National Aquaculture Association
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Corn Growers Association
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Grain and Feed Association
National Milk Producers Federation
National Oilseed Processors Association
National Pork Producers Council
North American Renderers Association
U.S. Canola Association
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

Cc:

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin, Chairwoman, Senate Agriculture, Rural
Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations
Subcommittee
The Honorable Sanford Bishop Jr, Chairman, House Agriculture, Rural
Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations
Subcommittee
The Honorable John Hoeven, Ranking Member, Senate Agriculture, Rural
Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations
Subcommittee
The Honorable Jeff Fortenberry, Ranking Member, House Agriculture, Rural
Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations
Subcommittee
The Honorable Debbie Stabenow, Chairwoman, Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and
Forestry Committee
The Honorable David Scott, Chairman, House Agriculture Committee
The Honorable John Boozman, Ranking Member, Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and
Forestry Committee
The Honorable Glenn 'GT' Thompson, Ranking Member, House Agriculture
Committee