



**WESTSIDE NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL**  
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CF # 12-0002-567

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September 14, 2012

Dear Councilmember Koretz,

The Westside Neighborhood Council, representing 80,000 stakeholders in Los Angeles, while acknowledging the opposition's arguments, voted unanimously on September 13, 2013, to support Proposition 37, a California ballot initiative which, if approved by voters in November, will establish mandatory food labeling requirements for genetically-engineered foods, and also to support your resolution addressing the same proposition now before the Los Angeles City Council.

At issue is the fundamental right consumers have to make informed choices about the food they eat and the food they feed to their children. Labeling foods does not imply a product is unsafe or will be confusing to consumers as some may argue. The FDA requires the labeling of over 3,000 ingredients, additives, and processes; providing basic information does not confuse the public, it empowers them to make choices. Absent labeling, Americans are unable to choose for themselves whether or not to purchase genetically-engineered foods. Also, labeling something containing genetically-engineered ingredients as "natural" is not only confusing, but misleading to consumers. Proposition 37 effectively addresses these issues.

Labeling food products is not at all unprecedented, nor uncommon. Every grocery shopper can pick up a can of food in any U.S. supermarket and read the ingredients. The Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act was enacted in 2004 and addresses, among other issues, the labeling of foods that contain certain food allergens, including peanuts, milk, eggs, fish, shellfish, wheat, and soybeans. This required food labeling did not cause any financial hardship nor additional lawsuits to food producers or farmers, nor will Proposition 37. Farmers already keep records of what they grow; food producers already label the products they sell.

Fifty countries with over 40% of the world's population already label genetically- engineered foods, including the entire European Union, Russia and China. Both Los Angeles and California should lead the United States on this important issue.

The Westside Neighborhood Council supports Proposition 37, which will provide consumers accurate and essential information about the food products they purchase so that they can make informed choices about the foods they eat.

Sincerely,

Terri Tippet, Chair

Cc: Mayor Villaraigosa, LA City Council

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