



September 25, 2014

Dear Los Angeles City Council,

Food & Water Watch urges you to support Council File 13-1374, the Koretz-O'Farrell GMO Free LA Motion, which would prohibit the planting, growth, sale and distribution of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) within the City of Los Angeles.

Food & Water Watch works to ensure the food, water and fish we consume is safe, accessible and sustainable. So we can all enjoy and trust in what we eat and drink, we help people take charge of where their food comes from, keep clean, affordable, public tap water flowing freely to our homes, protect the environmental quality of oceans, force government to do its job protecting citizens, and educate about the importance of keeping shared resources under public control.

We believe Californians have a fundamental right to make informed choices about the food they eat, and the food they feed to their children. GMOs represent a threat to consumer health, as they remain largely untested, and the FDA's regulatory assessment process regarding GMOs is voluntary. Furthermore, by developing crops that are resistant to pesticides, farmers are encouraged to use greater doses of toxic pesticides on crops, which work their way into waterways or onto dinner plates. There are too many unknowns with GMOs, which is why over fifty countries, including the European Union, China, and Japan, all require GMO food labels.

Los Angeles has made many great strides in allowing urban agriculture. However, the security of a budding new urban agriculture industry could be threatened by the cross-contamination of GMO pollen to locally grown non-GMO crops. By securing Los Angeles' 502 square miles as a GMO Free Zone, the city can better protect its urban farms from unintentional contamination. Los Angeles has also worked to secure rights for its pollinators (bees). Not only do some GMO crops require more pesticides which harm pollinators, some GMO crops are engineered to poison insects on contact. These varieties of plants represent an unequivocal threat to Los Angeles' pollinators, without which urban agriculture will not prosper.

When Los Angeles speaks, the country listens. When Los Angeles acts, the country follows. It is our belief that Los Angeles needs to take a leadership role on this issue to protect its residents and urban farms, and to set an example, not only to the state, but to the nation. Therefore, we urge you to support the Koretz-O'Farrell motion for a GMO Free LA.

Sincerely,

Walker Foley, Program Associate
Food & Water Watch | 323-843-8448

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