

**SAINT JEROME CHURCH**

5550 THORNBURN STREET  
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(310) 348-8212 FAX (310) 417-3577

September 21, 2014

Members of Los Angeles City Council  
200 N. Spring Street  
Los Angeles, California,

**Re: Council File 13-1374  
Prohibit the Growth of Genetically Modified (GM) Crops within City Limits**

Councilmember:

**We support a GMO-Free Zone in Los Angeles!**

1. A GMO-Free Zone in Los Angeles will protect home gardens, school gardens, community gardens and homegrown food. It will create an area of 502+ square miles (the City footprint) where it is safe to save heirloom vegetable seeds without threat of contamination from genetic modification. Contamination and pollution are among the highest in the poorer communities, which is an injustice that we as Catholics need to address more of.
2. A GMO-Free L.A. would encourage more economic development in urban agriculture in L.A. Local growers and food producers could promote their products as "GMO-Free." It would create local jobs, grow more local produce, and boost the local tax base. If everyone had a garden we could have enough food to feed the poor, or at least build a community to encourage that kind of thinking, which is what Catholic teaching is all about.
3. The long-term impacts of genetic engineering on human health are virtually untested, and there is no transparency of scientific findings. Recent studies in Europe are finding that genetically modified foods may be seriously detrimental to human health. Children in the U.S. are experiencing more allergies than ever before. We, as Christians, need to fight injustice when we see wealthy Corporations avoiding any type of scrutiny while continuing to expose everyone to chemicals/pesticides that they themselves have no clue as to its dangers or consequence to the people and the planet.
4. Creating a GMO-Free Zone will have no impact on the cost of purchased food. It will not affect the prices of conventional food, prepared food, or food grown outside the L.A. area. A GMO-Free Zone will protect homegrown food, and make it easier for citizens to save seeds – for free. It will boost people's ability to be self-sufficient. For those who are homeless and live below the poverty line, this could be a way for the church to unite and help this community get back on its feet.

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6. Keeping L.A. GMO-Free will help ensure the safety of our bee populations. It will be the poor and vulnerable who will be the ones most likely to suffer in the future from the lack of certain fruits in their diet, thereby resulting in major health issues and possible death.

7. This initiative stands the potential to have significant long-term impact on food security, because this initiative helps protect the diversity of vegetable plants. And that diversity is desperately needed for humanity's survival in a climate-changed future.

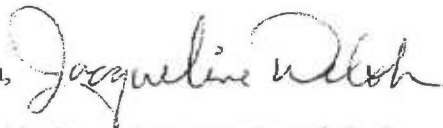
Since we represent the Church and Jesus teachings in caring for the poor, vulnerable and exploited, this initiative would be a step in the right direction in regards to our future generation and the planet in which they are to inherit. We as Church members want to ensure that we will leave a secure food source and a healthy planet in which all those in the future will be able to lead a healthy and sustainable life.

This initiative joins and supports the growing national and international movement to limit the spread of GMOs.

Please approve the motion introduced by Councilmembers Koretz and O'Farrell, and seconded by Councilmember Bonin. Please create a GMO-Free Zone in Los Angeles!

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Welsh,



Creation Sustainable Committee member of St. Jerome's Catholic Church, Los Angeles Diocese.