

September 11, 2013

The Honorable Harry Reid
Senate Majority Leader

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Senate Appropriations Chairwoman

The Honorable Dick Durbin
Senate Majority Whip

The Honorable Mark Pryor
Senate Agriculture Appropriations Chairman

Over 120 Organizations and Companies Strongly Oppose the “Monsanto Protection Act”

Dear Majority Leader Reid, Majority Whip Durbin, Chairwoman Mikulski and Chairman Pryor:

Earlier this year, hundreds of thousands of Americans called their elected officials to voice their frustration and disappointment over the inclusion of a controversial policy rider (Sec. 735) — dubbed “the Monsanto Protection Act”— in the Continuing Resolution spending bill (H.R. 933).

The rider represents a serious assault on the fundamental safeguards of our judicial system, and could negatively impact farmers, the environment and public health across America. Yet it was quietly slipped into HR 933 without congressional debate, hearings or input from any of the relevant committees.

Sec. 735 is an unprecedented overstep of the clear-cut boundary of a Constitutionally-guaranteed separation of powers essential to our government. This rider sets a dangerous precedent for congressional intervention in the judiciary. The ability of courts to review, evaluate and judge an issue that impacts public and environmental health is a strength—not a weakness—of our system. The loss of this fundamental safeguard could leave public health, the environment and livelihoods at risk.

The rider does not merely allow, it would force, the Secretary of Agriculture to immediately grant any requests for permits to allow continued planting and commercialization of an unlawfully approved genetically engineered (GE) crop. The rider also makes a mockery of USDA’s legally mandated review, transforming it into a ‘rubber stamp’ approval process.

The recent discovery of unapproved GE wheat in Oregon should serve as a wake-up call about the vulnerability of our export markets and the economic impacts that result from transgenic contamination. Japan and South Korea’s immediate suspension of U.S. white wheat exports – total wheat exports valued at over \$8 billion annually— is a reminder of the need for regulatory safeguards.

Our federal courts have long been the last resort for people seeking to challenge illegal actions by the government or its officials. Sec. 735 is a damaging step backwards.

Therefore, we the undersigned 129 food businesses and retailers, and family farm, consumer, health, environmental and civil liberties groups, representing many millions of Americans, oppose the “Monsanto Protection Act” and call for it to be excluded in the upcoming short-term FY14 Continuing Resolution spending bill.

Respectfully submitted,

Business, Trade and Farming Associations

Alaska Trollers Association
Albert's Organics
Amy's Kitchen
Annie's Inc.
California Certified Organic Farmers
Central Co-op (Seattle, WA)
Clif Bar and Company
CROPP Cooperative (Organic Valley)
EConsulting
Eden Foods
Equal Exchange
Federation of Southern Cooperatives
Good Earth Natural Foods
High Mowing Organic Seeds
I.N.T.A.C.T. Community Development Corporation
Independent Natural Food Retailers Association
Jacobs Farm / Del Cabo, Inc.
Lundberg Family Farms
Nature's Path Foods, Inc.
Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance
Northeast Organic Farming Association - Connecticut
Northeast Organic Farming Association - Interstate Council
Northeast Organic Farming Association - New Hampshire
Northeast Organic Farming Association - New York
Northeast Organic Farming Association - Rhode Island
Northeast Organic Farming Association - Vermont
Organic Farmers' Agency for Relationship Marketing, Inc.
Organically Grown Company
Organic Seed Growers and Trade Association
Organic Trade Association
PCC Natural Markets
San Francisco Crab Boat Owners Association
Stonyfield Farm
Straus Family Creamery
United Natural Foods, Inc.
Wood Prairie Farm

National, State and Local Organizations

AllergyKids Foundation
Alliance for Humane Biotechnology
Alliance for Natural Health-USA
American Civil Liberties Union
American Federation of Government Employees, Local 3354 (St. Louis, MO)
Beyond Pesticides
Bluefestival

Californians for Alternatives to Toxics
Carolina Farm Stewardship Association
Center for Biological Diversity
Center for Environmental Health
Center for Food Safety
Community Alliance for Global Justice
Community to Community Development
Community Food Projects
Community Food and Justice Coalition
Consumers Union
Cornucopia Institute
Cuatro Puertas
Dakota Resource Council
Dakota Rural Action
Earthjustice
Ecological Farming Association
Environmental Partnerships
Environmental Working Group
Farm Aid
Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance
Farm-to-Consumer Legal Defense Fund
Farmworker Association of Florida
Food Chain Workers Alliance
Food Democracy Now!
Food Rights Network
Food and Water Watch
Friends of Family Farmers
Friends of the Earth
Go Wild Campaign
Health Care Without Harm
Idaho Rural Council
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Institute for Responsible Technology
Iowa Breast Cancer Edu-action
Just Label It
Karuk Tribe
Label GMOs
Live Real
Loka Institute
Mangrove Action Project
Midwest Environmental Justice Organization
Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Services
Millennium Institute
Moms Advocating Sustainability
National Cooperative Grocers Association
National Family Farm Coalition
National Farmers Union
National Organic Coalition

National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
Natural Resources Defense Council
Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture Society
New England Farmers Union
Non-GMO Project
Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance
Northwest Center for Alternatives to Pesticides
Northwest Resistance Against Genetic Engineering
Oakland Institute
OMB Watch
Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility
Oregon Rural Action
Oregon Tilth
Organic Consumers Association
Organic Farming Research Foundation
Organic Seed Alliance
Partners for the Land & Agricultural Needs of Traditional Peoples
Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture
Pesticide Action Network North America
Physician Committee for Responsible Medicine
Progressive Agriculture Organization
Public Citizen
Roots of Change
Rural Advancement Fund International – USA
Rural Coalition/Coalición Rural
Rural Vermont
Sierra Club
South Florida Cancer Association
Sustainable Fairfax
Sustainable Living Systems
The Endocrine Disruption Exchange
Toxics Information Project
Union of Concerned Scientists
Washington Biotechnology Action Council
Western Colorado Congress
Western Organization of Resource Councils
Weston A. Price Foundation
World Farmers

Cc: Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell
Senate Minority Whip John Cornyn
Speaker John Boehner
House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi
House Appropriations Chairman Hal Rogers
House Agriculture Appropriations Chairman Robert Aderholt
U.S. Senate
U.S. House of Representatives