

# Los Angeles Proposes Banning GMOs

in

- [Regulation](#) [1]

Los Angeles is considering banning the cultivation and sale of genetically modified organisms. If it does, the second-largest U.S. city would become the country's largest GMO-free zone.

Two LA city councilmen on Friday introduced a motion that would ban the growth, sale and distribution of genetically engineered seeds and plants. The councilmen, Paul Koretz and Mitch O'Farrell, said the measure is meant to protect local gardens and homegrown food from contamination by genetically modified seeds. The motion would not affect the sale of food containing genetically modified ingredients.

"We don't want to consume mystery food," O'Farrell told The Huffington Post. "Since there's currently no requirement, anyone could unwittingly purchase a genetically modified product and not know it. I think that's irresponsible."

Genetically modified organisms have had their DNA altered by genetic engineering -- for example, a gene from another plant species, bacterium or virus may have been introduced into the organism's DNA. Genetically modified seeds are used mostly by large farmers, of which there are none in LA. "But if they become marketed to home gardeners, we're going to have this ban in place," David King, head of Learning Garden and Seed Library of LA, told HuffPost.

"The pending ordinance would be symbolic more than anything else, but we do feel it's an important step to have the second-largest city in the nation declare itself as against genetically modified seeds," said King, who helped craft the motion.

Joanne Poyourow, executive director of Environmental Changemakers of LA, said targeting city gardeners is easier than large farmers.

"Right now, it is very challenging to save that diversity in the farmlands, but we think we can provide significant help in saving that diversity by saving seeds within the cities," said Poyourow, who also worked on the motion.

Poyourow is part of a community of heirloom seed-savers in LA. "Our objective is to preserve a large area where heirloom seeds can safely be saved," she said.

O'Farrell said he thinks the worldwide decline of honeybees is the "canary in the coal mine" for GMOs. U.S. World commercial beehives declined 40 to 50 percent in 2012, with the suspicions of some beekeepers and researchers falling on powerful new pesticides incorporated into plants themselves. In California, almond agriculture, which depends on bees, has been hit especially hard. About 80 percent of the nation's almonds are produced in central California.

"A growing number of problems are being traced to GMOs," Koretz said in a statement. In addition to loss of bees, he cited "the evolution of 'superbug' insects which are growing immune to the pesticides engineered within GMO crops" and "'seed drift' (for example the recent finding of GMO-pollinated wheat growing in an Oregon farmer's field)."

Proponents of GMOs -- including food, biotech and chemical companies -- say there is no research proving that genetically modified food has less nutritional value than non-modified food. They also point out that genetic modification allows for insect- and weather-resistant crops that can help meet a rising global food demand.

## Los Angeles Proposes Banning GMOs

Published on NW Resistance Against Genetic Engineering (<http://nwrage.org>)

---

The LA motion comes weeks before Washington state will vote on ballot initiative 522, which calls for labeling food products that contain genetically modified ingredients.

Last November, Californians narrowly defeated Proposition 37, which would have made California the first state to require that genetically modified food be labeled. Monsanto, Kraft and Coca-Cola were among companies contributing to what became a \$46-million "No on Prop 37" radio and television campaign. Proponents raised \$9.2 million.

The U.S. has no requirement to label genetically modified food. In the last several years, a few U.S. localities, including San Juan County, Wash., and Mendocino County, Marin County and Arcata, Calif., have banned the cultivation of genetically modified organisms.

"If we aren't going to be able to rely on our state or federal leaders to do something about GMOs, we can act locally," O'Farrell said. "This statement goes beyond LA to the big food companies. LA's always been a trendsetter. As we know, so goes the West, so goes the rest of the country."

Posted: 10/21/2013

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/10/21/los-angeles-ban-gmo\\_n\\_4137166.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/10/21/los-angeles-ban-gmo_n_4137166.html) [2]

**Source URL:** <http://nwrage.org/content/los-angeles-proposes-banning-gmos>

### Links:

[1] <http://nwrage.org/category/topics/regulation>

[2] [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/10/21/los-angeles-ban-gmo\\_n\\_4137166.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/10/21/los-angeles-ban-gmo_n_4137166.html)