

108TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2919

To assign liability for injury caused by genetically engineered organisms.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 25, 2003

Mr. KUCINICH (for himself, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. SANDERS, Ms. LEE, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. OLVER, Mr. ACEVEDO-VILÁ, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Mr. NADLER, Mr. OWENS, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Ms. WATERS, Ms. WATSON, and Ms. WOOLSEY) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To assign liability for injury caused by genetically engineered organisms.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Genetically Engineered
5 Organism Liability Act of 2003”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 The Congress finds the following:

1 (1) The negative consequences of genetically en-
2 gineered crops may impact farmers who grow these
3 crops, neighbor farmers who do not grow these
4 crops, and consumers.

5 (2) Biotech companies are selling a technology
6 that is being commercialized ahead of the new and
7 unknown science of genetic engineering.

8 (3) Farmers may suffer from crop failures,
9 neighbor and nearby farmers may suffer from cross
10 pollination, increased insect resistance, and un-
11 wanted volunteer genetically engineered plants, and
12 consumers may suffer from health and environ-
13 mental impacts.

14 (4) Therefore, biotech companies should be
15 found liable for the failures of genetically engineered
16 crops when they arise.

17 **SEC. 3. LIABILITY.**

18 (a) CAUSE OF ACTION.—A biotech company is liable
19 to any party injured by the release of a genetically engi-
20 neered organism into the environment if that injury re-
21 sults from that genetic engineering. The prevailing plain-
22 tiff in an action under this subsection may recover reason-
23 able attorney’s fees and other litigation expenses as a part
24 of the costs.

1 (b) INDEMNITY.—For the purposes of subsection (a),
2 the term “injury” includes any liability of a person who
3 uses that organism in accordance with applicable Federal
4 and other law, if that liability arises from that use.

5 (c) NOT WAIVABLE.—The liability created by sub-
6 section (a) may not be waived or otherwise avoided by con-
7 tract.

8 (d) DEFINITION.—As used in this section, the term
9 “biotech company” means a person—

10 (1) engaged in the business of genetically engi-
11 neering an organism; or

12 (2) obtaining the patent rights to such an orga-
13 nism for the purposes of commercial exploitation of
14 that organism.

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