

April 13, 2010

Dear Senator:

The Global Food Security Act (S. 384), co-sponsored by Senators Robert Casey (D-PA) and Richard Lugar (R-IN), is intended to reform aid programs to focus on longer-term agricultural development, and restructure aid agencies to better respond to crises. With more people than ever before going hungry each day, this focus is commendable. The bill however inappropriately mandates one agricultural technology (genetically modified crops) for federal funding under the Foreign Assistance Act. This mandate is inappropriate and undermines the good intentions behind the broader focus on hunger. **We are writing today to ask that you oppose the Global Food Security Act until the bill is made technology-neutral.**

We are specifically concerned with section 202 of the Global Food Security Act on Agricultural Research. That language would amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to read "Agricultural research carried out under this Act shall . . . . . *include research on biotechnological advances appropriate to local ecological conditions, including gm technology.*" Proposed changes to this language, which may insert "...including *but not limited to gm technology*" would not materially change the language or the meaning of the bill that passed out of committee.

The current language mandates one highly controversial type of technology (transgenics), dominated by two or three companies (most notably Monsanto), to get both taxpayer cash and, by virtue of its raised profile, favored treatment under a bill ostensibly designed to help the poor and hungry. As one might expect, Monsanto (the world's largest purveyor of GM seeds) has done more lobbying on the Casey- Lugar Act than any other interest. The company spent over \$8.6 million directly lobbying Congress last year alone.

The trouble with a mandate for GM crops is simple: it will not solve world hunger. USAID has spent millions of dollars on developing genetically modified crops over the past two decades, with not one success story to show for all the taxpayer dollars spent.

The current controversy in India over Bt brinjal (eggplant) is a good example. Bt brinjal was developed in part with funding from USAID. After ten years in development, the product caused such an outcry from citizens, scientists and state government ministers upon its commercialization that the Indian national government put an indefinite moratorium on the crop. Other GM projects have failed to help farmers on the ground, but have succeeded in creating opportunity for the US biotech industry. A partnership between USAID and Monsanto to develop a virus-resistant sweet potato in Kenya, for example, failed to deliver a useful product for farmers. After fourteen years and \$6 million, local varieties vastly outperformed their genetically modified cousins in field trials. The project did, however, help establish a regulatory environment favorable to other commercial biotech applications.

If Congress singles out one technology and attaches it to a pool of foreign aid money, the pressure on developing countries to ignore local priorities and other scientifically valid options—and to open their markets to that one technology—will be substantial. Exerting such intense pressure on developing countries undermines the spirit of respect with which the US wishes to engage the rest of the world.

An alternative approach to global food security exists. In 2008, the World Bank and four UN agencies completed a four-year study conducted by more than 400 scientists and development experts from over

80 countries. Endorsed by 58 governments, the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) concluded that expensive, short-term technical fixes — including GM crops — are unlikely to adequately address the complex challenges that farmers face. Instead, the IAASTD highlighted the need to tackle the underlying causes of poverty. *IAASTD priorities for future agricultural research* include supporting biodiverse, ecological farming practices; increasing investments in agroecological science; and fostering collaboration between farmers and interdisciplinary teams of scientists to achieve locally, culturally and ecologically appropriate solutions.

By focusing on long term agricultural development, the Casey- Lugar Act takes one step toward addressing some of the more complex issues raised in the IAASTD. But mandating a specific and narrow technological fix—particularly one with little prospect of success and increasingly rejected by countries around the world—will undermine the more worthy efforts in this legislation.

As scientists and anti-hunger, religious, family farming, sustainable agriculture, environmental and consumer groups, we believe farmers and communities working with scientists—not Congress—should identify what technologies are most appropriate locally and what research is needed to meet socially and environmentally sustainable development goals. We ask that the mandate for GM crop research be stricken, eliminating Section 202 of the Global Food Security Act. This will keep agricultural research funding under the Foreign Assistance Act appropriately focused on the priorities and local conditions of small-scale farmers.

*Please oppose S. 384 until the bill is made technology-neutral.*

Respectfully,

Agricultural Missions (NY)	Food Chain Workers Alliance (CA & National)
Alaska Community Action on Toxics (ACAT) (AK)	Food Democracy Now! (IA)
California Food and Justice Coalition (CA)	Food Empowerment Project (CA)
Californians for GE-Free Agriculture (CA)	Friends of the Earth US (DC & National)
Californians for Pesticide Reform (CA)	Full Belly Farm (CA)
Center for Environmental Health (CA)	Galveston Baykeeper (TX)
Center for Food Safety (DC)	Grassroots International (MA)
Clean and Healthy New York, Inc. (NY)	Greenpeace US (National)
Community Alliance for Global Justice (WA)	Health Care Without Harm (National)
The Cornucopia Institute (WI)	Indiana Toxics Action (IN)
Cumberland Countians for Peace & Justice (TN)	Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (DC, MN & National)
Dakota Resource Council (ND)	Institute for a Sustainable Future (MN)
EConsulting (KY)	Institute for Food and Development Policy/Food First (CA)
Eden Foods, Inc. (MI)	Institute for Responsible Technology (CA & IA)
Environmental Partnerships (MA)	International Society for Ecology and Culture (CA)
Everybody Eats! (CO)	Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement (IA)
Family Farm Defenders (WI & National)	Jacobs Farm / Del Cabo (CA)
Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance (TX)	Justice from Farm to Plate (VT)
Farmworker Association of Florida (FL)	
Food & Water Watch (DC & National)	

Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (ME)  
 Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns (DC & National)  
 Minnesota Food Association (MN)  
 National Family Farm Coalition (DC & National)  
 National Organic Coalition (National)  
 Network for Environmental & Economic Responsibility of United Church of Christ (TN)  
 Non-GMO Project (CA)  
 Northeast Organic Farming Association Interstate Council (CT)  
 Northeast Organic Farming Association Massachusetts chapter, Inc. (MA)  
 Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance (ME)  
 Ohio Conference on Fair Trade (OH)  
 Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility (OR)  
 Oregon Toxics Alliance (OR)  
 Organic Consumers Association (MN)  
 Organic Seed Alliance (WA)  
 Permaculture Activist Magazine (IN)  
 Partners for the Land & Agricultural Needs of Traditional Peoples (WV)

Pesticide Action Network North America (CA & National)  
 Pesticide Free Zone, Inc (CA)  
 Physicians for Social Responsibility - Los Angeles (CA)  
 Safe Alternatives for our Forest Environment (CA)  
 Science and Environmental Health Network (IA)  
 Sierra Club (CA, DC, & National)  
 Slow Food USA  
 Southeastern Efforts Developing Sustainable Spaces (NC)  
 Sustainable Living Systems (MT)  
 Taos County Economic Development Corp (NM)  
 TEDX (The Endocrine Disruption Exchange) (CO)  
 The Oakland Institute (CA)  
 The Victory Garden Initiative (WI)  
 TransAfrica Forum (DC, national)  
 Washington Biotechnology Action Council (WA)  
 Western Organization of Resource Councils (ND, SD, WY, MT, CO, ID & OR)  
 WhyHunger (NY)  
 Women's Environmental Institute (MN)

***Development organizations (outside the US)***

African Centre for Biosafety (South Africa)  
 Agrar Koordination (Germany)  
 Biowatch South Africa (South Africa)  
 Butere Focused Women in Development (Kenya)  
 Center of Arab Women for Training and Research (Tunisia)  
 Consumers Union of Japan (Japan)  
 Eco-TIRAS Intl Env Assn of River Keepers (Moldova)  
 Ekogaia Foundation (South Africa)  
 ETC Group/Action Group on Erosion, Technology and Concentration (Canada)  
 Farmer-Scientist Partnership for Development (MASIPAG) (Philippines)  
 GMWatch (UK)  
 Green Foundation (India)  
 Kasisi Agricultural Training Centre (Zambia)  
 Nature's Path Foods Inc. (Canada)  
 Ng'ombe na Mahindi (NGMOA) (Kenya)  
 NO! GMO Campaign (Japan)

Organisation Béninoise pour la Promotion de l'Agriculture Biologique (OBEPAB) (Benin)  
 Pesticide Action Network Africa (Senegal)  
 Pesticide Action Network Asia and the Pacific (Malaysia)  
 Pesticide Action Network UK  
 Pestizid Aktions-Netzwerk (Germany)  
 Plaguicidas y Sus Alternativas de América Latina RAPAL-PAN Internacional (Latin America)  
 Practical Action (UK)  
 Red de Acción en Plaguicidas y sus Alternativas para América Latina (RAP-AL) - PAN Latin America  
 Safe Food Coalition (South Africa)  
 Save Our Seeds (EU)  
 Servicio de Información Mesoamericana sobre Agricultura Sostenible (SIMAS) (Nicaragua)  
 South African Freeze Alliance on Genetic Engineering (South Africa)  
 Southeast Asian Council for Food Security & Fair Trade (SEACON) (Malaysia)

Third World Network (Malaysia & International)  
Uganda Network on Toxic Free Malaria Control  
(UNETMAC) (Uganda)

Women for Sustainable Development (Tunisia)  
49th Parallel Biotechnology Consortium (Intl)

***Independent scientists and development experts\****

Dr. Hans Herren, President Millennium Institute\*  
and Co-Chair, IAASTD

Dr. Molly D. Anderson, College of the Atlantic,\*  
IAASTD Coordinating Lead Author, North America  
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Dr. Philip Bereano, Professor Emeritus, University  
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(Spain/Italy)

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Columbia Okanagan,\* IAASTD Coordinating Lead  
Author, Latin America & Caribbean Report  
(Canada/Peru)

Dr. Falguni Guharay, IAASTD Lead Author, Latin  
America & Caribbean Report (Nicaragua)

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IAASTD Lead Author Synthesis Report (New  
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Dr. William Stafford, Proteapermaculture (South  
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East Asia & Pacific Report (US/China)

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Cc: Members of the Senate

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