

City of Point Arena Passes Ordinance Restricting the Growing of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 25, 2004

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The City of Point Arena has become the second city in the State of California to restrict the growing of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs). The ordinance prohibits “any person, partnership, corporation, firm or organization of any kind to sell, distribute, propagate, cultivate, raise or grow seeds, whole plants, or crops of genetically modified organisms.” Food biotechnology has been linked to unanticipated environmental effects including reductions in biodiversity and impacts to human health.

Point Arena Mayor, Leslie Dahlhoff, stated, “I am pleased the City Council of Point Arena recognizes the need to be cautious with this technology.” Citing concerns of ecological contamination and subsequent reductions in genetic variability, Britt Bailey of Environmental Commons said “Right now the corporations producing GMOs are free from accountability even though it is well established that genetic pollution can occur.”

And, according to Jan Edwards of the California Center for Community Democracy, “Decisions pertaining to our food supply should remain in the hands of the local people. By restricting the growing of genetically modified organisms, we are protecting our locally grown foods from corporate ownership and encouraging less-intensive, more sustainable farming systems.”

Point Arena is a coastal city located in Mendocino County. In March 2004, Mendocino County passed a citizen initiative prohibiting the cultivation of genetically modified organisms. However, county initiatives do not pertain to cities. Point Arena’s new ordinance restricting genetically modified organisms sustains the beliefs and opinions of the people of Mendocino County.

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