

**Subject:** Re: Tasmania's GE Moratorium Review  
**Date:** Tuesday, 30 April 2019 10:54:38 PM

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To Members of the Tasmanian GE Moratorium Review Panel,

As a certified organic food wholesaler/retailer based in Tasmania but servicing customers Australia-wide for the past 28 years, my husband and I have become increasingly aware that these customers are not just seeking out organic food for its chemical and artificial fertilizer-free status but very much for its GE free status as well.

There is a growing body of scientific evidence gained mainly from animal studies thus far, pointing to the fact that the consumption of GE food stuffs is damaging to the health of the first generation exposed to it as well as to future generations should the first generation even be capable of reproducing at all. I realise that the health aspect of the GE issue is not within the parameters of this review but it does relate to an area that definitely is and that is the economic advantage vs disadvantage of Tasmania's GE free status. My contention based on my own research and observation re what is happening in the food marketplace worldwide is that there is a growing resistance to the pressure coming from the big agri companies that are pushing GM crops that are resistant to glyphosate and this push back is coming not only from consumers but national governments as well. Countries like Russia for example have banned all GE crops and are seeking to grow as much of their food as they can organically.

Tasmania has a lot to lose by abandoning its GE free status. It would definitely be a backward step as far as those who export their food internationally are concerned. Tasmania is known for its clean, green GE free status and should this status be compromised by lifting the moratorium all those food producers who have so far found niche markets that require products be GE free would immediately be put into the position of proving to their customers that the food they were selling was not affected by GE contamination.

Many farmers have been persuaded by agri company reps that growing GE crops will be easier for them as they won't have to spend so much time, effort and expense on weed management. Experience in the US and other Australian States has shown that glyphosate for example which is used in conjunction with GE crops but is highly toxic and has been proven over and over again in scientific studies to be carcinogenic, is only effective on weeds for a certain length of time before a resistance to the chemical develops resulting in the proliferation of super weeds that are far more difficult to eradicate. Also if a farmer agrees to grow a GE crop under license he is obligated to purchase seed from the agri company every year and is unable to save a portion of his harvest for re-sowing in subsequent years. In the long run this takes the control of food production out of the hands of farmers and into the hands of the big companies. Land degradation and pollination problems are also the result of overuse of glyphosate in conjunction with GE crops. It has now been proven that herbicides like glyphosate are largely responsible for the phenomenon known as Colony Collapse Disorder in the world's bee populations and this is most evident in the countries where GE herbicide resistant crops are widely grown. Tasmania's niche GE free honey export market would take a severe hit if the moratorium were to be lifted because there is no way a grower could prove that his bees weren't sourcing pollen from GE crops and of course the bees would potentially be at risk of dying en masse from the effects of the chemical contamination.

While lifting the GE ban might seem appealing at first glance to primary producers there is no reason whatsoever why consumers would want to preference GE food over GE free food. In fact there is a host of reasons why discerning consumers would want to avoid GE foods at all costs if they have any concern for their long term health and the health of their offspring.

Based on my own research it seems obvious that the introduction of GE-based agriculture overseas and in other Australian states has resulted in negative affects on the health of the soil, on environmental sustainability, on the quality of the food being produced and thus on the physical health of both human and animal populations. This is why consumers who are gradually becoming more aware of these affects are rejecting it and calling for GE labelling on products so that they can choose to avoid it.

My contention is that given the increasing awareness of the dangers of GM food and its associated chemicals and the consequent buyer resistance to this type of food in the marketplace that Tasmania should be capitalising on its unique current position as a GE free island State and promoting this aspect of its agricultural production when seeking new markets interstate or overseas rather than becoming just like the rest and losing the competitive edge that its existing GE free status currently affords.

I very much hope for many reasons and not just those touched on in this submission that the moratorium is extended in the short term but becomes redundant at some future point when Tasmania's GE free status is eventually enshrined in government legislation.

Yours faithfully,

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