

## I522 Summary and Rebuttals

The purpose of 522 is to inform grocery shoppers whether the food they buy and eat is produced through genetic engineering. We believe we can and should choose for ourselves - without corporations deciding for us - what goes into our grocery bags.

I522 gathered the second highest number of signatures for any initiative in our state's history. People support it for a variety of reasons, including

- environment concerns about more pesticides on land and in food residues
- pesticides linked to collapse of honeybees
- animal welfare issues, from engineering fish and other animals
- social equity, shouldn't be only affluent people who can choose



The original coalition was led by wheat farmers and now includes the Wash. State Association of Nurses, farmers markets, Young Farmers Coalition, United Farmworkers union, the state labor council AFL-CIO, grocery stores, the Wash nurses association, Physicians for Social Responsibility, salmon commission, senior citizens state association, and thousands of moms and dads.



522 carefully complies with Code of Federal Regulations Title 21 in exempting alcohol, processing aids, restaurant and take-out foods, and medical foods. These are exempt under federal law. If we included them, we'd be accused of contravening federal law.



522 eliminates the uncertainty and rapidly rising costs of NOT labeling, which already is costing farmers and our state treasury as much as \$100 million this year alone, from lower wheat prices.

We also saw alfalfa rejected for export this summer, and Washington farmers paid the price.



Future losses from not labeling include salmon, apples, and wheat – GMO varieties of these foods are all imminent.

522 provides for no inspections, no audits, fees or certification and no threshold for rejection of any products. It protects any producer or manufacturer with a

“Safe harbor clause”.

Farmers and manufacturers already separate and label foods from farm to grocery store. Farmers markets tell us, Systems are in place now.

There is no evidence labeling in any of the 64 countries with labeling restrictions raised food prices, so the opposition funded their own study to suggest there would be high costs to label GMOs.

I-522 protects our fundamental right to know what we're buying to eat, and it's compatible with laws in Alaska, Connecticut, Maine and 64 countries include our most important trade partners.

522 will give everyone in Washington the right to know what's in their food – no matter where they shop or what they can afford – including WIC moms, farmworkers, and seniors without giant companies deciding for us what we eat without disclosure or transparency.