



# Green Team Committee Minutes

Wednesday, October 10, 2012, 7:00pm

Meetings end at 8:00pm unless the committee votes to end earlier or extend the time

**ROOM 607, LAB BUILDING (BUILDING BEHIND ADMINISTRATION BLDG.)**

Hamilton Senior High School

2955 S. Robertson Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90034

## I. Call to Order & Roll Call

- a. Committee Members: Larry Hess, Barry Levine, Saran Kirschbaum, Anne Sutton, Karen Smith-Laramay, Charmaine Colina, Anne Geffner, Elisa Leonelli, Neal Anderberg, Paula Waxman, Martin Epstein, Erick Morales, Armando Roman
- a. Committee Members Present: Larry Hess, Saran Kirschbaum, Karen Smith-Laramay, Paula Waxman, Armando Roman.
- b. Community Members Present: Conner Everts

## I. General Public Comment

- c. We are moving the November Green Team meeting to either Monday, November 5th or Thursday, November 8th.

## II. New Business

- a. Report from Conner Everts from Food and Water Watch: Peripheral Tunnels under the Sacramento Delta
  - i. 80% of water usage in the state has no metering.
  - ii. Water usage has been flat in urban areas since 1980.
  - iii. LA gets it's water from 3 sources: Owens Valley (60%), Colorado River, State Water Aqueduct (30%)
  - iv. There have been 7 water bonds over the past 13 years in the state of California.
    1. The latest water bond was a down payment on the canal project of \$20b.
  - v. We should promote local water usage and conservation.
    1. 7 to 8% is loss.
    2. Per capita daily water usage in our state: 174
      - a. LA: 124 gallons
      - b. Long Beach: 120 gallons
      - c. San Diego: 300 gallons
      - d. Australia, Spain, Israel: 30 gallons
  - vi. Pacinst.org: Pacific Institute has a lot of information on water usage.
  - vii. We should be investing in local water sources and we should be telling the DWP.
  - viii. Fracking uses the fresh delta water.
  - ix. How can we get involved? There is not a consensus on the canals at the time being. We can get involved with Food and Water Watch.
- b. Motion: Prop. 37: Mandatory Labeling of GMO's (See Attachments)  
Passed unanimously with all members

## III. Old Business

- a. Fracking Motion:
  - i. Passed at the last SoRo Board Meeting
- b. Ewaste Drive Co-sponsored by Hamilton High School Enviro. Club is scheduled for Saturday, Jan. 26 from 10 to 2
  - i. Will be working with California Recycles: Please start saving all your electronic waste ESPECIALLY cell phones, tv's, and computers and monitors
- c. Urban Fruit Pick scheduled for SUNDAY, December 2<sup>nd</sup>. We will need about 30 student volunteers
- d. Important: 350.org Event UCLA Student Union Ackerman Hall, 6:00, 11.11.12  
Please sign up at: [act.350.org/signup/la-do-the-math/](http://act.350.org/signup/la-do-the-math/)
- e. Adjournment

**Doug Fitzsimmons**  
President

**Brian Kite**  
Vice-President

**Terrence Gomes**  
Treasurer

**Martin Epstein**  
Secretary

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Neighborhoods Council**

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**Notes:**

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*Special thanks to our official posting locations:*

Demers & Associates, The Robertson Blvd Library, The Robertson Recreation Center, The Office of Councilmember Paul Koretz, Malcolm Brown Insurance Co., Hamilton High School, and the SORO NC and DONE websites.

In compliance with Government Code section 54957.5, non-exempt writings that are distributed to a majority or all of the Board in advance of a meeting may be viewed at our website (soronc.org) or at the scheduled meeting. In addition, if you would like a copy of any record related to an item on the agenda, please contact us via phone at (310) 295-9920 or via email at [info@soronc.org](mailto:info@soronc.org).

Translators, sign language interpreters, assistive listening devices for the hard of hearing and/or other auxiliary aids/services are available upon request. To ensure the availability of services, please make your request at least three (3) working days before the scheduled date. If you have any questions regarding this notice, please call (213) 485-1360.

SI REQUIERE SERVICIOS DE TRADUCCION, FAVOR DE NOTIFICAR A LA OFICINA 3 dias de trabajo (72 horas) ANTES DEL EVENTO. SI NECESITA ASISTENCIA CON ESTA NOTIFICACION, POR FAVOR LLAME A NUESTRA OFICINA AL (213) 485-1360.



# Motion to Support Proposition 37: Mandatory Labeling of GMO's in California Food Supply

**Agenda Item:** To Be Filled in by Exec Committee

**Date:** October 18, 2012

**Proposed By:** Green Team Committee

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## Full Proposal

The following summary was taken from two LA Times articles:

LA Times.com, "*Battle over genetically engineered food heading to voters*", Marc Lifsher, July 19, 2012.

LA Times, "*Prop. 37: 'Another example of the perils of the initiative process'*", Michael Hiltzik, Sept. 16, 2012

Proposition 37 on the Nov. California ballot requires certain genetically engineered foods sold in California to be labeled. Genetically engineered food is produced from a plant or animal whose biological traits contain DNA that has been manipulated in a laboratory at the cellular level. The technique was pioneered over two decades ago to boost productivity by making crops resistant to insects, plant diseases, pesticides and herbicides. Genetically engineered crops account for about 90% of U.S. corn, soybean and sugar beet production. Genetically modified fresh fruits and vegetables...include Hawaiian papayas, sweet corn, zucchini and yellow squash. There would be exemptions for meat, dairy products, eggs, certified organic foods, alcoholic beverages and, restaurant food. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has decreed genetically engineered foods to be safe...and ruled that labels need not reflect whether ingredients have been genetically engineered. The FDA's labeling policy ...[claims it] "has no basis for concluding that bioengineered foods differ from other foods in any meaningful or uniform way."

But concerns persist about the unforeseen consequences of this laboratory tinkering on human health and the environment...Some consumers and scientists worry about... risks, such as the potential for GMO foods to cause allergic reactions in humans or the contamination of GMO seeds in non-genetically engineered fields. Critics also fear that big companies could gain monopolies over supplies of expensive patented seeds that make crops resistant to...herbicides.' Proponents maintain that "...People are interested in knowing what's in their food..." About 50 countries across Europe, South America and Asia have passed labeling requirements for genetically engineered foods....Similar efforts in 20 U.S. states...failed to overcome opposition from the processed food and biotech industries."

"Opponents say labeling would unfairly besmirch popular and reputable products, raise food prices and spur frivolous lawsuits while doing little to protect the public's health. Passage of the initiative could create a cumbersome... state food labeling laws if other states follow California's lead..." Furthermore, labels are "very costly, are not going to be informative, and there is absolutely no basis in science for this," said Martina Newell-McGloughlin, director of life and health science research initiatives at UC Davis. The labeling campaign, she said, is sowing fear and doubt"...Organic farmers and food processors could use the initiative as a marketing tool to boost market share for their products, which are typically more expensive

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## The Creation of the Motion

Eight science students from Hamilton High studied this issue over the 2012 summer, and put together a panel of 6 speakers who were willing to publically discuss both sides of Proposition 37. These students are: Raquel Avalos, Jennifer Bennitez, Elias Garcia, Abraham Mendez, Erick Morales, Fateen Mukarean, Pejman Salehsari, and Sienna Tsan.

The Pro Prop 37 Panelists were: Pamm Larry, Initiator of the Proposition 37 Initiative; Andy Shrader, Deputy of Environmental Affairs and Sustainability, Office of City Councilman Paul Koretz; and David King, Founding Chair, Seed Library of Los Angeles, Gardening and Horticulture Instructor, UCLA Extension.

Against Prop 37 were: Chhandak Basu, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Dept. Of Biology, California State University, Northridge; Brendan Huffman, No. on Prop. 37 Campaign; and Mary Landau, LA Chapter President of Women for Agriculture.

After the Panel Discussion on Prop. 37, which was held at Hamilton High School on September 6<sup>th</sup> and open to the community, the students were asked to decide how they would vote on the proposition and make a recommendation to the Green Team in the form of a motion. The Green Team would then consider whether or not to forward their recommendations on to the SoRo Board. Five members of the student team voted in favor of Proposition 37, one member voted against the proposition, and two members abstained.

## Proposed Motion

The "Proposition 37 Hamilton High School Study Team" recommends that the Board of the South Robertson Neighborhoods Council write a letter to the City Council of Los Angeles in support of passage of Proposition 37 which would require mandatory labeling of some genetically engineered foods sold in California .

Their reasons Included (but were not limited to):

1. Labeling would not present an undue hardship on the food industry and growers because most food already requires labeling. Adding a simple GMO mention should not be difficult or costly. Many countries already require labeling.
2. Consumers have a right to know what is in their food and how it is produced, not only for potential health reasons but also because a consumer may not wish to support a product or an industry that promotes genetic modification that they consider as possibly injurious to the environment.
3. If food containing genetically modified organisms are indeed safe, then food processors, growers, and marketers should have no cause to be concerned about a label.
4. The importance of detailed labeling will encourage consumers to choose healthier foods that have not been processed or modified.

See letter attached.




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## Considerations

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**Committee review:**  
*(highly recommended)*

Votes For:5

Against:0

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**Amount previously allocated in Committee's working budget:**     \$ neutral  
*(applies to funding motions only)*

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### Arguments for:

See items 1 through 4 above under "Proposed Motion"

It is feared that GMO's can also adversely effect pollinating insects and other wildlife that depend on non-engineered plants for survival

More independent studies need to be conducted. A 2009 editorial in *Scientific American* "Do Seed Companies Control GM Crop Research?" asserts that much of the research is controlled by the companies that create the engineered products. The user agreements of agritech companies "...explicitly forbid the use of the seeds for any independent research. Under threat of litigation, scientists cannot test a seed to explore the different conditions under which it thrives or fails....And perhaps most important, they cannot examine whether the genetically modified crops lead to unintended environmental side effects."

The over reliance on a specific GMO crop modified to be herbicide resistant has led to a more herbicide resistant weed. Farmers now need to use stronger more problematic herbicides.

### Arguments against:

A ballot initiative is a poor way to craft policy dealing with complex scientific issues . We need a consistent national food policy.

Costly labeling will lead to higher food prices further stressing folks going through tough economic times

There is little if any evidence that that bioengineered food is dangerous to consumers. Some foods have even been engineered to remove allergens.

If consumers want to avoid GMO's they can purchase products labeled "organic" or consult an online registry <http://truefoodnow.org/shoppers-guide/> listing GMO-free foods..

Enforcement would largely occur through lawsuits brought by members of the public who suspect grocers of selling unlabeled food, so the burden of proof for proper labeling falls on retailers which could be a hardship for small grocers.



Councilman Herb Wesson  
LA City Council  
200 N. Spring Street, Room  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

18 October 2012

Re: Proposition 37: Mandatory Labeling of GMO Foods

Dear Los Angeles City Council Members:

The South Robertson City Council Board recommends that the City Council of Los Angeles support of passage of Proposition 37 which would require mandatory labeling of some genetically engineered foods sold in California .

First and foremost, consumers have the basic right to know what is in their food and how it is produced. It is important that this process be transparent not only for potential health reasons but also a consumer may not wish to support a product or an industry that they consider as possibly injurious to the environment.

Labeling would not present an undue hardship on the food industry and growers because most food already requires labeling. Adding a simple GMO mention should not be difficult or costly. Many countries already require labeling.

If food containing genetically modified organisms are indeed safe, then food processors, growers, and grocers should have no cause to be concerned about a label. The importance of detailed labeling will encourage consumers to choose healthier foods that have not been processed or modified.

Sincerely,

Doug Fitzsimmons, President  
South Robertson Neighborhoods Council

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