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NEWS RELEASE

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CHAC Joins 21 Organizations In Proposing Mandatory Labelling of Genetically Engineered Foods

Ottawa - The Catholic Health Association of Canada (CHAC) joined twenty-one health, environment and consumer organizations this week releasing a concrete proposal for the mandatory labelling of genetically engineered (GE) foods. Their proposal comes as government and industry begin an 18-month negotiation on a voluntary labelling standard.

“Countries throughout the world, including Japan, Korea, Germany and the U.K., have already established mandatory labelling requirements. In Canada, polls show as many as 90% of Canadians want labelling. Thus far, the federal government has been unresponsive to public demand,” said Mary Pat Skene, CHAC chairperson.

The statement was released on the eve of the first meeting of the Committee on Voluntary Labelling of Foods Obtained Through Biotechnology. The Committee is co-ordinated by the Canadian General Standards Board and was launched in co-operation with the Canadian Council of Grocery Distributors.

“We have little faith that this 18-month process is anything other than a stalling tactic - particularly when the committee is largely formed of groups that have consistently opposed labelling,” said Lucy Sharratt from the Sierra Club of Canada.

The proposal, which is contained in a letter to Health Minister Allan Rock, Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Lyle Vanclief, and Industry Minister John Manley, highlights the need for full, mandatory labelling. The letter notes that the chief researcher for the British Medical Association stated recently that possible health effects of genetically engineered foods cannot be traced unless products containing GE ingredients are labelled fully and completely.

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Signatory List:

Action Réseau Consommateur
Biotech Action Montreal
Canadian Biotech Action Network
Canadian Health Coalition

Canadian Health Food Association
Canadian Labour Congress
Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions
Catholic Health Association of Canada
Coalition for a Green Economic Recovery
Council of Canadians
David Suzuki
Foodshare
Greenpeace
National Farmers Union
National Pensioners and Senior Citizens Federation
Natural Law Party of Canada
Ontario Coalition of Senior Citizens
Ontario Health Coalition
Registered Nurses Association of Ontario
Sierra Club of Canada
Sierra Youth Coalition

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