



CONSERVATION COUNCIL
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA INC.

12 April 2007

Elton Humphery
Committee Secretary
Community Affairs Committee
Parliament House
Canberra ACT

Dear Sir

Gene technology Amendment Bill 2007

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission. The Conservation Council of Western Australia (Inc) finds:

Gene technology Amendment Bill 2007

To ensure that regulatory burden is commensurate to risk, provisions in the Bill will differentiate between limited and controlled release of genetically modified organisms and commercial releases.

Comment – Details of proposed release of gm organisms and commercial releases should be made available for public comment. In cases where there is potential for contamination or where segregation of GM and non –GM crops are not readily available, issues such as containment and potential liability should be addressed.

Food standards Australia and New Zealand Amendment Bill 2007

Agree with the variation to one-size fits all BUT all cases should still undergo INDEPENDENT testing. At present the authority (FSANZ) relies on data and research done by companies submitting their applications.

The Conservation Council of WA would also like to raise the following issues in regards to Senator Abetz's speech relating to the Gene Technology Amendment Bill 2007 and Food Standards Australia New Zealand Amendment Bill 2007.

Firstly, we consider trials to be equal risk to those of commercial releases. Therefore proposed trials should be subject to full scrutiny and there should be no further reduction in the assessment process of trials of Genetically Modified (GM) crops.

Details of proposed trials should be made available for public comment especially where there is potential for contamination or where segregation of non-GM and GM crops are fully addressed.

In regards to the amendments to the Food Standards Australia and New Zealand Amendment Bill 2007, the Conservation Council of WA is concerned that the authority (Food Standards Australia and New Zealand, FSANZ) relies predominantly on research submitted by applicants. Independent and more vigorous testing of should be carried out in the approval process. We agree that proposals should be assessed according to the nature and scope of the applications but caution against the review process being shortened so that backlog of applications could be cleared.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Yours faithfully

Chris Tallentire
DIRECTOR