

Reference: **07/04056**

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter of 14 March 2007 to which you attached a Petition (No 793-07) that had been submitted to the Queensland Parliament by Mr Frank Ondrus.

As requested I am attaching a copy of the letter I have sent to Mr Ondrus and will also send you an electronic copy of this correspondence.

If you require any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact Kristian Holz, Policy Advisor in my office on 07 3239 3000.

Yours sincerely

TIM MULHERIN, MP
Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries
Member for Mackay

Att (1)

Reference: **07/04737**

Mr Frank Ondrus
PO Box 6118
Toowoomba West Qld 4350

Dear Mr Ondrus

Thank you for the effort you have taken in writing to the Queensland Parliament. The Queensland Clerk of the Parliament has provided me with a copy of your petition in which you outlined your concerns over the commercialisation of genetically modified (GM) food crops in Australia. I would like to respond to some of the points in the petition.

The Queensland Government is a strong advocate for the development of a biotechnology industry in Queensland. However, this does not mean it automatically supports the commercial release of all GM crops. It does however support a thorough case by case risk assessment of each new GM crop by the national Office of the Gene Technology Regulator which undertakes these assessments.

The Gene Technology Regulator assesses GM crops for their impact on human health and the environment. It does not assess the marketing implications for those crops, an area that is dependent on the influence of commercial market forces in supply and demand.

The Queensland Government does not support moratoria on GM crops. Its position is that if these crops pass through the tough regulatory hurdles imposed by the Gene Technology Regulator then the decision on whether to plant these crops is one for the farmer, not the government.

The Gene Technology Regulator approved the commercial release of genetically modified canola Australia wide in 2003 so theoretically it could be grown in Queensland. However, canola is not well adapted for growing in Queensland, and it is highly unlikely that GM canola will ever be grown in Queensland unless varieties specifically suited to our climatic conditions are developed.

The review of the *Gene Technology Act 2000 (C'wth)* has been completed and its recommendations have been discussed with the Australian and State and Territory Governments. The outcomes from the review have been finalised and have resulted in a number of proposed changes which will be disclosed when amendments to the current *Gene Technology Act 2000 and Regulations* are introduced into the Australian Parliament in the second half of 2007.

If you require any further information regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact Peter Cronin of the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries on telephone 07 32393289 or email Peter.Cronin@dpi.qld.gov.au

Yours sincerely

TIM MULHERIN, MP
Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries
Member for Mackay