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Media Release
For Immediate Release

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Food on Store Shelves Not Safe

"Right now, all across Canada, there is food on our grocery store shelves containing genetically modified organisms. This food has not been proven safe. Nor has it been labeled so that consumers can choose not to eat it. As a citizen and a consumer, this is not acceptable.", according to Stephanie Coburn, Sussex-area farmer and volunteer director of the Conservation Council of New Brunswick.

Today, 17 groups sent a letter addressed to the federal Ministers of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Environment Canada and Industry, Trade and Commerce. The letter demands that the Federal government impose a moratorium on and the retraction of commercial permits/licences of cross-species GMO substances. This moratorium would be effective until sufficient third party research is conducted to determine if these substances have any negative impact on the health of people, animals or soil microorganisms.

Gabrielle Kretzschmar of NB Partners in Agriculture states, "It is astonishing that no government itesting on the long-term health effects of these foods has been conducted. The government has not used the precautionary principle. Companies promoting GMO products should be required to prove their safety, instead of injured consumers having to prove harm."

Ron Fournier, consultant in ecological agriculture, says, "Some of these organisms can be injurious to soil health. The Federal Government has caved into pressure from multi-national companies to put GMO's on the shelf without adequate testing. European countries have recognized the potential harm that these products can cause to the agriculture sector and have banned GMO importation. Just last week, the President of France told Jean Chretien that further independant testing needs to be done in order to protect the public!"

The groups are asking the Ministers to meet with them to discuss this issue.

Honourable Lyle Vanclief, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Tel: (613) 759-1059

Honourable David Anderson, Minister of Environment Canada
Tel: (819) 997-1441

Honourable John Manley, Minister of Industry Canada
Tel: (613) 995-9001

Dear Ministers,

We, the undersigned groups, have been examining the issue of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO's) in our food system. It is most alarming that these substances have been placed on grocery shelves without the public's knowledge. Furthermore it is astonishing that no government testing on the long-term health effects and applying the "precautionary principle", has been conducted.

The purpose of this letter is to request that you and your cabinet colleagues impose a moratorium on and the retraction of commercial permits/licences of cross-species GMO substances;

This moratorium to be effective until sufficient third party research is conducted to determine if these substances have any negative impact on the health of people, animals or soil microorganisms;

This research to be funded by the Federal government.

More and more people are becoming concerned with this issue of GMO's in our food. Many are upset that the food industry has integrated these substances into our food supply without any public discussion. We represent a large number of organizations in New Brunswick and this letter to you reflects our views on this issue.

In Europe public discussion has resulted in firm government action to ban GMO's from grocery shelves until appropriate independent research is conducted. In North America there has been little public discussion and even less unbiased research. This must be corrected and we sincerely hope you agree.

Our concerns are serious and we therefore trust you will respond soon and positively to our initiative. We also ask that you meet with us to discuss these issues further. Please contact the Biotechnology Action Group, 167 Creek Road, Waterford, N.B. E4E 4L7, Tel: (506) 433-6101, Fax: (506) 433-6111, Email: nben@nbnet.nb.ca

Thank you for your consideration of this letter.

Yours truly,

- Association pour la préservation du bassin versant de Bouctouche

- Atlantic Canadian Organic Regional Network
- Campaign for Pesticide Reduction - NB
- Canadian Organic Advisory Board
- Clearinghouse Group, Glassville
- Comité de l'environnement de L'École aux Quatre Vents, Dalhousie
- Coopérative O Naturel Ltée, Kedgwick
- Falls Brook Centre, Knowlesville
- Fédération des naturalistes du Nouveau-Brunswick
- Ford Alward Naturalist Association, Glassville
- Fredericton Oxfam Local Committee
- Fundy Environmental Action Group, Alma
- Grand Lake Meadows Committee
- New Brunswick Partners in Agriculture
- Organic Crop Improvement Association - NB Coop, Ltd
- People Against Nuclear Energy, Moncton
- Sierra Youth Coalition - Dalhousie University
- St. Thomas University/University of New Brunswick Environmental Society
- Sussex Society for the Public Interest
- Tantramar Environmental Alliance, Sackville
- Wild Circle, Quispamsis

cc: Honourable Paul Robichaud, New Brunswick Department of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Aquaculture

Honourable Kim Jardine, New Brunswick Department of Environment and Local Government

Honourable Joan MacAlpine, Business New Brunswick