



The Honourable Marjorie Michel P.C., M.P., Minister of Health
CC: The Honourable Heath MacDonald P.C., M.P., Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food;
The Honourable Joël Lightbound, Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and
Procurement; Alexandra LaGroix, Senior Director, Canadian General Standards Board, Public
Services and Procurement Canada.

**RE: Urgent need to complete the Canadian General Standards Board’s review of the
standard for the “Voluntary Labelling and Advertising of Foods That Are and Are Not
Products of Genetic Engineering.”**

March 25, 2026

Dear Minister Michel,

Further to our letter of February 24, 2026, requesting your implementation of mandatory labelling for genetically engineered foods, we are writing to bring your attention to the urgent need for the Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB) to complete its process of review of the standard for “Voluntary Labelling and Advertising of Foods That Are and Are Not Products of Genetic Engineering.”

The standard revisions had achieved important clarity on the definition of genetic engineering. The standard review committee had voted to include genome editing within the definition of genetic engineering in the standard. The revised standard was therefore set to ensure that Canadians were not misled by genome edited foods labelled as non-genetically engineered.

We are now just days away from the April 1st closure of the CGSB but we have no information about the status of the revised standard that was the product of a year-long committee process that we participated in, and was, most importantly, subject to a public comment period.

The revised standard was due to be published in May 2026. However, rather than working to conclude the review process one month ahead of schedule, the process appears to have been abandoned. This includes the CGSB’s failure to, as yet, provide the committee of stakeholders with final minutes from our last meeting of October 20, 2025, and failure to provide a report from the public comment period that ended on January 23, 2026.

We understand that the CGSB has been working on a transition plan for its catalogue of standards and we appreciate that this is a difficult and busy time for the CGSB. However, January 2026 government statements referring to this labelling standard were made after the Budget announcement of CGSB closure and led us to assume that this standard revision process would be concluded.

Responding to e-petition 6768 requesting mandatory labelling of genetically engineered (GE) foods, the Government of Canada referred Canadians to this existing voluntary standard ([January 26, 2026](#)) and, in announcing the approval of a gene-edited pig, Health Canada referred Canadians to this standard and to the standard review process itself ([January 23, 2026](#)). In our view, the failure to complete the standard would contradict these government statements.

The voluntary labelling standard was established in response to the public demand for mandatory labelling and, over twenty years, it has been consistently referred to by the federal government in response to this ongoing demand for mandatory labelling of genetically engineered foods. We are therefore very concerned that, in the notable absence of mandatory labelling, the integrity of the voluntary labelling standard should not be undermined.

We urge you to urgently address this transparency and public trust issue and publish the revised standard for “Voluntary Labelling and Advertising of Foods That Are and Are Not Products of Genetic Engineering.”

Sincerely,



Lucy Sharratt
Coordinator
Canadian Biotechnology Action Network



Thibault Rehn
Coordinator
Vigilance OGM

The Canadian Biotechnology Action Network (CBAN) brings together 14 groups to research, monitor and raise awareness about issues relating to genetic engineering in food and farming. CBAN members include farmer associations, environmental and social justice organizations, and regional coalitions of grassroots groups. CBAN is a project on the shared platform of MakeWay Charitable Society. www.cban.ca

Vigilance OGM is a Quebec non-profit organization made up of groups and individuals from diverse backgrounds – farmers, environmentalists, consumers, citizens – all concerned about what we put on our plates every day and by the impact of modes agricultural production on the environment and human health. www.vigilanceogm.org