

Gene Technology Bill Objections



9 Reasons to
Oppose the Gene
Technology Bill

A Clear Guide

Friday 10 October 2025: The Health Select Committee released its report recommending that the Gene Technology Bill be passed.

Nearly 14,500 people made submissions, and 97% opposed it. Yet the Bill is still being pushed forward.

So what exactly is wrong with it? Here's a simple, plain-English checklist of why so many New Zealanders are saying NO — not a complete list, and in no particular order of importance.

1. Public Ignored = Democracy Denied

When **97% of submissions say NO**, yet the Committee still recommends passage with only minor tweaks, consultation starts to look like a box-ticking exercise.

The report itself acknowledges the sheer number of submissions — more than 14,000 — and the fact that most opposed the Bill. Yet the Committee, by majority, still recommended that it proceed.

This raises the obvious question:

if overwhelming opposition isn't enough to change the outcome, what number would be?

And whose voices are really being listened to?

2. No Labels, No Choice

The Bill does **not introduce any requirement to label genetically engineered (GE) foods**.

That means consumers will have no guaranteed way to know whether their breakfast cereals, oils, or other products contain GE ingredients. Submitters raised this point repeatedly, warning that the absence of labelling strips away the basic right of consumer choice.

Overseas, labelling is the norm — because people have the right to know what they're eating. Under this Bill, New Zealanders won't.

3. Local Voices Silenced

Currently, local councils can declare GE-free zones or set policies restricting release in their regions. The Bill removes that ability and **centralises all decision-making with a new national regulator**.

Submitters to the Committee argued this would silence communities who want to remain GE-free, whether for farming, organic, cultural, or ecological reasons. The Committee report confirms these concerns, though it did not recommend changes to restore local decision-making.

This shift takes power away from local people and hands it to central government.

4. Unregulated GE Loopholes

The Bill **creates exemptions** for some gene-editing techniques, meaning they will not be regulated in the same way as traditional genetically modified organisms.

The Committee report makes this explicit: certain gene-edited organisms would be excluded from regulation altogether, treated as "low-risk." That means they could enter the food supply or environment **without testing, registration, or ongoing monitoring**.

Many submitters warned this creates dangerous loopholes. Once unregulated GE organisms spread, there will be no record or accountability.

5. Export Risks

New Zealand's economy depends heavily on exports to markets like Europe and Asia — regions that enforce strict rules around GE.

The Committee heard from industry submitters who raised these risks. The report acknowledges concerns about how GE release could undermine access to overseas markets and damage the reputation of New Zealand's "clean, green" brand.

It only takes one contaminated shipment to lose a customer. Once lost, trust in our products is extremely hard to regain.

6. No Liability Clarity

What happens if GE crops spread onto your farm, your beehives, or your garden? Who pays?

The Bill does not clearly answer this question. The Committee report does not provide any assurance of a liability regime that protects ordinary farmers, beekeepers, or growers.

In overseas cases, farmers who never planted GE crops have actually been sued for "patent infringement" when contamination occurred. Without explicit protections in law, New Zealanders risk facing the same unfair outcomes.

7. More Chemicals

Globally, the vast majority of GE crops are engineered to tolerate herbicides — particularly glyphosate (Roundup). That means they are designed to survive repeated spraying.

This is why the Gene Technology Bill cannot be separated from MPI's current proposal to raise glyphosate residue limits in food by up to **9,900%**. Together, these two policy shifts mean one thing:

More GE crops, more spraying, more chemicals in our food and environment.

Rather than reducing chemical use, the Bill entrenches it.

8. Biodiversity Threat

New Zealand has unique ecosystems found nowhere else in the world. Releasing GE organisms into the environment threatens that biodiversity.

The Committee report acknowledges submissions that raised concerns about environmental contamination, gene flow, and cross-pollination. Once GE plants or animals spread, they cannot be recalled.

That means permanent changes to species and ecosystems that future generations will inherit — whether they want them or not.

9. Treaty Concerns

Under Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Māori are supposed to have a meaningful role in environmental decision-making. Many submissions argued that the Bill falls short.

The Committee itself noted these concerns. In response, it recommended a small amendment: that Māori advisory roles in the new regulatory framework be broadened beyond just indigenous species, to include non-indigenous species of significance as well.

But the bigger issue remains: are Treaty obligations being meaningfully upheld, or reduced to token gestures?

Bottom Line

The Gene Technology Bill is being sold as “modernisation” and “innovation.” But strip away the rhetoric, and the reality is clear:

- Consumers lose choice.
- Communities lose power.
- Farmers and exporters face new risks.
- Environmental safeguards are weakened.
- Treaty obligations are minimised.
- And democracy itself looks sidelined when 97% opposition can be ignored.

What You Can Do

- Share this article to spread awareness.
- Use it as a checklist when people ask what’s wrong with the Bill.
- Politely tell your MP you oppose it: [NZ Parliament MP Directory](#)

Silence is no longer an option.

Further Reading

Health Select Committee Report on the Gene Technology Bill (2025)

The official parliamentary report recommending the Bill be passed, despite overwhelming public opposition. Outlines the Committee's reasoning and minor amendments.

[Read the full report →](#)

Organics Aotearoa NZ (OANZ) — Submission on the Bill

Highlights risks to the organic sector, food sovereignty, and export markets if GE release is allowed. Stresses the lack of consumer choice and labelling.

[OANZ statement →](#)

Greenpeace Aotearoa — Why Oppose the Gene Technology Bill?

Outlines environmental and health risks, the entrenchment of chemical farming, and the threat to New Zealand's biodiversity.

[Greenpeace overview →](#)

Newsroom — Food safety handles thousands of objections as glyphosate review drags on

Reporting on the glyphosate review, showing how widespread public objection is being sidelined in parallel processes. Illustrates the pattern of ignoring public concern.

[Newsroom article →](#)

GE Free NZ — Media Statements

Consistently critical of the Bill, emphasising consumer choice, trade risks, and the irreversible nature of GE release.

[GE Free NZ website →](#)

9 Reasons to Oppose the Gene Technology Bill NZ

Quist, D., & Chapela, I. H. (2001). *Transgenic DNA introgressed into traditional maize landraces in Oaxaca, Mexico*. *Nature*, 414, 541–543.

Landmark study showing GE maize contamination spread into traditional non-GE varieties despite bans. Proves GE release is uncontrollable once it begins.

[Abstract →](#)

Hilbeck, A., et al. (2015). *No scientific consensus on GMO safety*. *Environmental Sciences Europe*, 27, 4.

Peer-reviewed paper signed by 300+ scientists, highlighting the lack of consensus on GE crop safety and the need for precaution.

[Full text →](#)

The Gene Technology–Glyphosate Connection (NoMoreGlyphosate.nz)

Explores how the push to weaken GE regulation goes hand-in-hand with proposals to raise glyphosate residue limits. Together, they open the door to more chemical farming in New Zealand.

[Read here →](#)

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No More Glyphosate NZ is a grassroots campaign dedicated to raising awareness about the health and environmental risks of glyphosate use in New Zealand. Our mission is to empower communities to take action, advocate for safer alternatives, and challenge policies that put public safety at risk. Join us in the fight to stop the chemical creep!

9 Reasons to Oppose the Gene Technology Bill

In "9 Reasons to Oppose the Gene Technology Bill NZ," discover why an overwhelming 97% of New Zealanders stand against a legislative proposal that threatens consumer choice, environmental safety, and the integrity of local communities. This guide outlines critical concerns, from unregulated gene-editing techniques to the potential devastation of biodiversity and economic risks to export markets. As the voice of the public is sidelined, this article empowers readers to understand and challenge the implications of this controversial bill.