

Labor unions back Washington Measure I-522 to label GMOs

Labor organizations in Washington are endorsing a statewide ballot initiative that would require labeling of genetically engineered foods starting July 1, 2015.

I-522, on the Nov. 5 ballot, would require food offered for retail sale in Washington be labeled "genetically engineered" if it contains genetically engineered foods. That's the law in 64 other countries, but in the United States, consumers are usually in the dark about whether the foods they buy contain genetically-engineered ingredients.

"We really need to know what we're eating," said Painters Local 10 President Roben White, a Vancouver resident who is active in the campaign to pass I-522.

Unlike traditional techniques of plant breeding like hybridization, genetic engineering involves the insertion into plants of genetic material from other plants, animals, bacteria, and viruses — combinations that cannot occur in nature. Most genetically engineered crops are designed to withstand herbicides and pesticides, and I-522 backers say that's resulting in increased use of those toxic chemi-

icals. Herbicide-resistant weeds have emerged, infesting farms and roadsides, and complicating weed control for farmers and encouraging use of increasingly toxic and more dangerous herbicides. Herbicides can damage soil vitality, contaminate drinking water, and pose health risks to consumers and farmworkers.

Worker safety is one reason unions have come out in favor of the labeling initiative. At the July 2013 convention of the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO, delegates passed a resolution of support for I-522 in part because farm workers and their families are sickened by exposure. Other labor organizations have endorsed the initiative, including Inland Boatman's Union (IBU), Puget Sound Region; International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) locals 46 and 76; International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 52 and the ILWU Puget Sound Regional Council; United Farm Workers; and the Washington State Nurses Association.

On the other side, chemical companies have poured \$17 million into the campaign to defeat the measure, including \$4.2 million from Monsanto and \$3.2 million from Dupont Pioneer. Opponents are outspending supporters by about four-to-one.

Ballots are scheduled to be mailed out Oct. 18, and must be postmarked on or before Nov. 5 to be counted.

If the initiative passes, Washington would be the first state in the nation to

pass such a measure. California voters narrowly rejected a similar measure

last year after a \$46 million campaign by opponents.

Leavitt, Burkman, Topper, McEnerny-Ogle get labor backing for City Council

VANCOUVER — The Southwest Washington Central Labor Council and Columbia Pacific Building and Construction Trades Council have endorsed the re-election of Vancouver Mayor Tim Leavitt in the Nov. 5 general election. Leavitt is seeking a second four-year term. He is being challenged by City Councilor Bill Turlay in the nonpartisan race.

The two labor bodies also endorsed the re-election of Vancouver City Councilor Jack Burkman, as well as the election of Alishia Topper and Anne McEnerny-Ogle. Topper is challenging long-time incumbent Jeanne Stewart, and McEnerny-Ogle is seeking the seat now held by Jeanne Harris. Harris is not seeking re-election.

Neither council took action on any of the six advisory measures put on the ballot by the Clark County Board of Commissioners.

Three of the measures ask voters if they favor an Interstate 5 replacement bridge, a new bridge to the east of the county, or a new bridge to the west of the county.

Two of the advisory votes will ask if commissioners should oppose light rail and bus-rapid transit projects.

The final vote will ask voters if they want to limit use of fireworks to July 4.

All six advisory votes are nonbinding.

Ballots are scheduled to be mailed out Oct. 18, and must be postmarked on or before Nov. 5 to be counted.

**Do you have hearing loss?
Come and see the #1 Union preferred provider!**



According to the The Better Hearing Institute, the #1 reason for hearing loss today is... **NOISE EXPOSURE.** In most cases, it only takes eight total hours of damaging noise exposure to cause hearing loss.

**American Made –
American Owned Manufacturer**
BBB's 2011 Oregon Business of the Year
Priority Appointments for Union Members

**Willoughby
Hearing**
We Listen. You Hear.

**Call for more information (877) WILL-HEAR
or visit www.willhear.com for a location near you.**

Carpenters, Electricians, Laborers, Glaziers, Sheetmetal Workers, Floorcoverers, Bricklayers, Cement Masons, Roofers, Asbestos Workers, Millwrights, Painters, Elevators, Plasterers, Family



**More Holidays coming!
And we have just the treat
you need without any tricks!!**

Time for a Holiday Loan
\$500 to \$2,500
Low Rate: 9.99%*
12 easy payments
**Available now through
January 31, 2014**

**Stop in today, apply online, or
call 503-253-8193**

*Rates subject to credit qualifications and terms. Limited time offer.

**IBEW AND
UNITED WORKERS
FEDERAL
CREDIT
UNION**

9955 SE Washington Street
Portland, OR 97216

(503) 253-8193 * (800) 356-6507
www.ibewuwfcu.com

Carpenters, Electricians, Laborers, Glaziers, Sheetmetal Workers, Floorcoverers, Bricklayers, Cement Masons, Roofers, Asbestos Workers, Millwrights, Painters, Elevators, Plasterers, Family