



## *Researchers#3*

### **Private Members Bills 40<sup>th</sup> Parliament of Canada An Update**

The Parliament of Canada has prorogued. The third session of Canada's 40<sup>th</sup> Parliament will begin on March 3, with a speech from the Throne. The federal budget will be tabled on March 4.

When a session ends, all government business ceases, including all government bills.

However, Private Members business is not affected. All Private Members Bills stay on the order paper and the order of business stays the same.

CSTA is currently watching a number of Private Members Bills which have been introduced and given first reading in the House of Commons.

**Bill C-205** – Food Products Labeling Act Sponsor: Paul Dewar, NDP, Ontario

Is a mandatory labeling bill, which says: “no person shall sell any food product that has been produced using pesticides or genetically modified organisms unless a label is affixed to the package or food product clearly showing that the food product has been produced using pesticides or genetically modified organisms”.

**Bill C-353** – Terminator Seeds Ban Sponsor: Alex Atamanenko, NDP, B.C.

“Prohibits the release, sale, importation and use of organisms incorporating, or altered by, variety-genetic use restriction technologies (V-GURTs), also called “terminator technologies”, that have the result of preventing the reproductive viability and survival of the organisms (e.g., plants) or their offspring (e.g., seeds).”

**Bill C-370** – Mandatory Labeling for Genetically Modified Foods Sponsor: Alex Atamanenko, NDP B.C.

This bill states that the Minister is responsible for establishing, on the basis of scientific evidence, that a food or one or more of its components are genetically modified.

As soon as the Minister declares that the food or one or more of its components is genetically modified, the Minister is required to have the name of the food published in the *Canada Gazette*. The Minister must also prepare a list of all such foods and have a copy sent at no cost to any person who requests it.

This food and food products containing this food cannot then be sold in a package unless a label containing the following notice is affixed to the package: “*This product or one or more of its components have been genetically modified.*”

In addition, this food and food products containing this food cannot be sold without a package unless a sign in the prescribed form containing the following notice is posted near the food: “*Genetically modified*”.

**Bill C-474** – Amendments to the Seeds Regulations (Analysis of Commercial Harm) Sponsor: Alex Atamanenko, NDP B.C.

This Bill would amend the Seeds Regulations to require that an analysis of potential harm to export markets be conducted before the sale of any new genetically engineered seed is permitted.

The Bill of most urgent concern on this list is Bill C-474. Mr. Atamanenko's name has been placed on the list of precedence and he has chosen this bill as the business that he wants to have debated in the house during Private Members Business Hour.

CSTA policy supports science based regulatory systems. CSTA's policy manual clearly sets out CSTA's policy when it comes to market assessments:

*"CSTA believes that regulatory decisions must be science based and predictable. CSTA does not support making regulatory approvals and decisions in Canada conditional on international market approvals."*

CSTA, on its own, and with a coalition of like minded organizations from along the value chain and across commodities, is opposing Bill C-474 and is working towards its defeat at 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading in the House of Commons.

The best guess is that Mr. Atamanenko's name will make its way to the top of the 30 member list by sometime in late March ( he is currently number 10 on the list) for its first hour of debate at 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading. Then his name goes back to the bottom of the list and must make its way back up to the top for the second hour of debate and a vote. That will likely happen before Parliament breaks for summer. It is important to note that if the bill is passed, it is supported in principle by the House of Commons, and from then on the intent of the bill cannot be changed.

There is some discussion in the offices of MPs and Ministers, of letting the bill go to the House Committee before it gets 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading. CSTA and its coalition partners are also opposing this proposal.