www.unifynz.org
info@unifynz.org
Non Political Organisation

Gene Technology Bill Recommendations (6 August 2025)

The Coalition Agreement between National & NZ First under the "Primary Sector" article states: "Liberalise genetic engineering laws WHILE ENSURING STRONG PROTECTION FOR HUMAN HEALTH & THE ENVIRONMENT."

We believe this statement is NZ First's ability to oppose the Gene Technology Bill.

1. Political Process and Public Mandate

a) **A Call for a Referendum:** A decision of this magnitude, with such profound potential risks, should not be imposed by legislators alone. Instead, it should be put to a public referendum. This would allow all New Zealanders to make an informed choice based on full information, respecting the principle of bodily autonomy and informed consent on a national scale.

b) **Take A Precautionary Approach:** We suggest you advocate for pausing the legislative process until more objective, long-term international scientific results are available and extensive, genuine public input can be gathered.

2. Legal, Ethical, and Transparency Concerns

a) **Violation of the Bill of Rights:** Removing mandatory labelling requirements for gene-altered foods violates the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990. Section 10 (the right not to be subjected to medical or scientific experimentation without consent), argues that without labelling, people are unknowingly participating in a massive public health experiment.

b) **Removal of the Precautionary Principle:** A central criticism is the bill's removal of the Precautionary Principle, which is a cornerstone of the current HSNO Act. This principle requires products to be proven safe ***before*** release. Thus, shifting the burden of proof, which runs contrary to the fundamental tenets of scientific caution and public health and safety.

3. Economic and Agricultural Risks

a) **Undermining the "Clean, Green" Brand:** Deregulating gene technology risks catastrophically damaging to New Zealand's agricultural economy. The nation's "Clean and Green" reputation is a primary market advantage, and abandoning its GE-free status could trigger trade barriers and consumer backlash in key overseas markets that reject GE products.

b) **Loss of Organic Leadership:** For decades, New Zealand's GE-free status has been a key enabler of its organic sector. Introducing GE crops will destroy the nation's chance to be a world leader in organic farming due to the unavoidable risk of cross-pollination.

c) **Increased Costs and Corporate Control:** GE farming relies on patented seeds and technologies, which increases costs for farmers and, ultimately, for consumers. This deregulation could shift New Zealand's diverse farming landscape towards a corporate-controlled monoculture, driven by patents and reducing farmer autonomy.

4. Scientific, Health, and Long-Term Risks

a) **Documented Scientific Dangers:**

1. A **2022 *Genome Research* study** found that CRISPR gene editing can cause extensive, unintended disruptions, including major DNA rearrangements which alter cell function.
2. A **2023 *Chemosphere* study** highlighted the inherent risks of bio-contamination in the gene-editing manufacturing process, making quality control extremely difficult.

b) **Impact on Human and Animal Systems:** Gene editing could alter the fundamental systems of organisms, potentially impacting immunity, health, intelligence, and even personal identity in both humans and animals.

c) **Untraceable, Long-Term Effects:** The long-term, cumulative effects of these technologies are unknown and may take generations to manifest. By removing robust regulatory oversight, the bill makes future traceability, detection, and prevention of negative outcomes nearly impossible.

5. Irreversible Clauses -

a) Broad clauses grant the government extensive powers enabling mandates and emergency authorisations with minimal oversight (Clauses 52-56).

b) This Bill also seeds New Zealand's control to foreign authorities risking misuse while remaining justified within the framework. This undermines national sovereignty in public trust. We do not need globalists running our country. Gene technology carries irreversible risks that cannot be recalled or contained. Despite commercial claims of safety and economic necessity government lack credibility, removing labelling disregards public choice replacing protections with opaque regulations. The principle should be to implement ***stronger*** public safety protections, not weaker ones. Ministers are immune from Civil & Criminal Liability-Clause 187.

6. Revaluate Timing-

a) Deregulating biotechnology before the final report of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the COVID-19 Pandemic Response (due in Feb. 2026) is considered "reckless." The clear implication is that New Zealand should learn from the lessons of the pandemic first - which involved novel biotechnology (mRNA vaccines), emergency authorisations, and global health bodies - before dismantling existing safeguards around the Gene Tech Bill.

Conclusion: The Call to Action

- The Gene Tech Bill represents an unacceptable transfer of power, an abdication of national sovereignty, and a reckless disregard for irreversible risks and the principles of transparent, democratic governance. We highly recommend NZ First to oppose, delay or at the very least take a precautionary approach. Otherwise, we are losing NZ's national sovereignty.
- In summary, the Gene Technology Bill represents a reckless gamble. It abandons proven safety principles, violates New Zealanders' rights, threatens the nation's economic identity, and ignores scientific evidence of significant, irreversible risks all for the sake of unproven benefits. NZ's citizens demand accountability, transparency, and the protection of our rights to safe, natural choices. We recommend NZ First takes this to a Members Bill which will gain your party enormous credibility and votes for the 2026 Elections.

Sources: Articles & Videos

- Biotechnology Threatens Humans-- re Guy Hatchard - Feb.2025
- Physicians & Scientists for Global Responsibility New Zealand (PSGR) -When powerful agencies hijack democratic systems.- Mar 2025
- Japen Wants NZ to Stay-GE Free -Feb.2025
- The Gene Technology Bill Contains a Covert Assault On Our Kiwi Culture – Guy Hatchard -Jan 2025
- Gene Technology Overview & Reality Check Radio's Expert Panel -Jan 2025
- NZ Gene Tech Bill is an ACT of War- Mary Hobbs via NZDSOS website Feb 2025
- New Gen Tech Bill a Sticky Constitutional Mess- JR Bruning, Daily Telegraph Feb 2025

Thank you for your time and consideration on this critical matter. Let me know if you need additional information.

Respectively submitted,

Colin Coupe,
Unify NZ Team, Warkworth
Auckland North