



Friday, December 8, 2006

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper  
Prime Minister of Canada  
House of Commons  
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6

Dear Prime Minister:

It has come to my attention that the official Canadian position on the on-going ban of terminator seeds is ambiguous, and that the Canadian Food Inspection Agency is preparing the road for approval of terminator seeds. Unitarians across Canada are very concerned. We strongly urge you to promote the continued ban of terminator seed technology.

Unitarians consider it a religious imperative for all concerned citizens to protect the sensitive interdependent web of life on this planet, our only home. The primary purpose of every species on earth is to continue life by reproducing itself. Creation is made up of many diverse species and sub-species living in complex ecosystems based on relations of interdependence. We have no idea what the consequences of introducing something as dangerous as terminator seeds into this web of life will be, and we have no way of testing in advance to find out.

There can be no possible justification for introducing a technology that goes so against the ways of the natural world. The only apparent reason for supporting such a practice is to give the powers of private ownership and property rights to corporations for their personal profit. In the past, in Canada, farmers, universities and governments have worked together to develop new varieties of seed for all to use. In some cases today, corporations take the seed developed by many generations of farmers, make one genetic change, and patent that seed. The introduction of terminator seeds is a step in the process of taking control away from independent farmers and granting control of the world's food supply to private companies.

Such a concentration of power over the basic needs of life should not be in the hands of people who are not ultimately accountable to the public good. It would also be a major violation of the rights of farmers to save and reuse their own seeds. It threatens farmer livelihoods, food security, and agricultural biodiversity, globally, and here in Canada.

Farmers have saved seed since the beginnings of human agriculture. Each farmer has saved the seed that thrived best in a particular place under particular conditions to ensure the best possible results for the next crop year. The diversity of the seeds have provided





optimal chances for survival under different conditions. Terminator seeds promote reduction in genetic diversity. The Seeds For Survival program of the Unitarian Service Committee is a proven model that has helped poor farmers in the third world survive drought and bring land back into production. This program empowers farmers to stay on the land and feed their families.

So far, Canada has supported the international moratorium on Terminator Seeds at the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity. We applaud this decision. The Canadian Unitarian Council appeals to you to be firmly committed to maintaining this ban.

Canada's position on terminator seeds is important to the rights and independence of Canadian farmers, but it is equally important to millions of farmers around the world. Canada is considered a leader in the area of agriculture. This is an environmental and an economic justice issue. The choice we make will influence the ultimate decisions of the world on this issue.

Please instruct the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to ensure and promote a ban on terminator seed globally. In Canada, we ask that you enact legislation banning all research, field-testing, and commercial production of terminator seeds in Canada. Take a clear stand on this issue. Let us walk on this planet with an attitude of humility, a respect for life and for the way of nature. Affirm the rights of all farmers to save and reuse their own seed. Affirm life.

Yours sincerely,

Vyda Ng  
President,  
Canadian Unitarian Council/ conseil unitarien du Canada

Cc: The Hon. Chuck Strahl, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food  
Wayne Easter, Liberal Agriculture Critic  
André Bellavance, Bloc Québécois Agriculture Critic  
Alex Atamanenko, NDP Agriculture Critic  
Elizabeth May, Green Party Leader