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June 10, 2004

Assemblyman Thomas P. DiNapoli
Room 625, Legislative Office Building
Albany, NY 12248

Dear Assemblyman DiNapoli:

The Center for Food Safety is pleased to endorse Assembly Bill No. A10315 and your efforts to prevent the sale of transgenic fish in New York. Because transgenic fish, both food and aquarium transgenic fish, are being developed for commercial use, the potential release into the environment is imminent. Senate Bill No. 6537 would give New York citizens assurance that these exotic creatures would not invade their aquatic ecosystems and harm their native fishery resources.

Transgenic fish present a host of serious risks to the environment. The risk of biological contamination from transgenic fish is particularly acute, since transgenic fish may easily escape into the wild either through inadequate fish farming methods or the intentional release by owners of pet fish. The harm from transgenic fish interbreeding with wild fish is predicted to be severe. A Purdue University study concluded that the release of transgenic fish could cause the extinction of an entire fish species in a matter of a few generations. This conclusion was confirmed in a recent experiment by these scientists. The National Academy of Sciences also issued a report warning that the escape of transgenic fish into our oceans and rivers could wreck havoc on the environment.

Despite these potentially irreversible environmental risks, there is a profoundly disturbing lack of federal regulation of marine biotechnology. As such, we applaud your leadership on this issue and hope the New York legislature can step into the void by ensuring that transgenic fish are not sold in New York.

Sincerely,

Tracie Letterman
Fish Program Director