



Interview with John D. Liu

John D. Liu, ecosystem restoration researcher, educator and filmmaker, has dedicated his life to sharing real-world examples of once-degraded landscapes newly restored to their original fertile and biodiverse beauty. Liu is director of the Environmental Education Media Project, ecosystem ambassador for the Commonland Foundation and a visiting research fellow at the Netherlands Institute of Ecology of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences. He's also, we're thrilled to announce, the newest member of the steering committee for Regeneration International, a project of OCA.

Alexandra Groome from our Regeneration International team recently interviewed Liu. In the interview, Liu walks us through large-scale ecosystem restoration projects in China and Rwanda. We learn that when humans work with nature, degraded landscapes can be restored in a matter of years, and economies can be regenerated, putting food security and climate change mitigation within our reach. The key take-away from our interview with Liu: If we are to survive as a species, humanity must shift from commodifying nature to "naturalizing" our economy.

Read the interview: orgcns.org/1LtQ791

Support OCA's Regeneration International project: orgcns.org/1PIoNM4

Censored!

VAXXED - From Cover-Up to Catastrophe is a documentary film based on claims by Dr. William Thompson that he and colleagues at the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) lied about the results of their own study, a study that revealed a link between the MMR vaccine and the rise of autism in African American boys. The film, directed by Andrew Wakefield and produced by Del Bigtree, features journalist Ben Swann who examines Thompson's claims through interviews he conducts with doctors, journalists, authors and former CDC specialists. Robert De Niro, co-founder of the Tribeca festival and parent of an autistic child, came under fire for plans to screen the film at this year's prestigious Tribeca Film Festival. When the complaints started rolling in, the actor initially defended the decision. But on March 26, he pulled the plug, telling *The Hollywood Reporter*, he didn't believe the film "contributes to or furthers the discussion I had hoped for." How much pressure did Big Pharma and its complicit partners in Big Media exert on De Niro to get him to pull the plug? Text "Tribeca" to 97779 to sign the petition. Watch the trailer: youtu.be/EdCU2DfMBpU

Take Action: orgcns.org/25yOb5y



Label It!

Stop Fooling Around

In observance of April Fools Day, OCA activists will deliver jester hats to several key U.S. Senators, along with this message: Thank you for voting against the Sen. Pat Roberts' (R-KS) DARK Act (S.2609) Please don't make fools of the nine out of 10 voters who want GMO foods labeled by accepting a compromise version of the bill in order to preempt, or delay implementation, of Vermont's GMO labeling law. We know that several of the Senators who voted against the DARK Act on March 16, are on record as wanting to preempt Vermont's law. We believe they're just waiting for Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) to introduce a compromise bill—and then they'll turn right around and betray you.

Who are those Senators? Sen. Klobuchar (D-MN), Sen. Durbin (D-IL) and Sen. Bennet (D-CO). What will they do when Congress reconvenes and the Senate takes up the DARK Act again? We guess they'll vote to preempt Vermont by supporting some sort of compromise to the DARK Act. OCA rejects any federal labeling bill unless it meets or exceeds the standards set by Vermont, and does not preempt or delay implementation of Vermont's bill. Since there's less than a snowball's chance in hell Congress will pass such a law, we think Congress should stop fooling around, get out of the way, and let Vermont's law proceed on schedule. Here's why:

- There is no constitutional basis for preempting Vermont, according to this legal analysis by a Republican firm, and according to U.S. District Judge Christina Reiss's 84-page ruling against the Grocery Manufacturers Association and other industry groups' request for a preliminary order to block the Vermont law. Judge Reiss said: "The safety of food products, the protection of the environment and the accommodation of religious beliefs and practices are all quintessential governmental interests, as is the state's desire to promote informed consumer decision-making."
- States have a constitutional right, granted in the 10th Amendment, to enact laws when the federal government has failed to take action. The Vermont bill has been upheld thus far by the federal courts because its "Findings' and 'Purpose' reflect a substantial interest in the need to disclose information relevant to potential health consequences from human consumption of GE food; to accommodate religious beliefs and practices regarding GE and GE food; to promote informed consumer decision-making; and to address the potential 'unintended' consequences from GE food production to non-GE crops and the environment." This is why the majority of consumers, both in Vermont and across the nation and the world, support labeling, not because of some abstract "right to know" concept. As the court found, the Vermont law is "supported by a state interest beyond merely satisfying consumer curiosity."
- Also as reinforced by the ruling on Vermont, state GMO labeling laws do not interfere with interstate commerce, despite industry's attempt to convince Congress members otherwise.
- After he took office, President Obama issued an executive order calling on federal lawmakers to not preempt state laws. The President explained that, even though the Federal Government's role in promoting the general welfare is "critical," the States play a concurrent and often more aggressive role in protecting the health and safety of their citizens and the environment. In the interest of the health and safety of its citizens and their environment, Vermont lawmakers passed a strong, constitutionally sound labeling law. Even if Republicans agreed to a mandatory federal law, that law would pale by comparison to Vermont's. There would be exemptions, high thresholds and loopholes. It's just naive to think Congress, whose members take in millions from Monsanto and Big Food lobbyists, will do the right thing. Multinational food companies are already beginning to remove GMOS, or label them in all 50 states. Once corporations are required to state "produced with genetic engineering" on products that contain GMOS, consumers will either choose to buy them, or choose not to buy them. Depending on what consumers do, food companies will decide whether or not to keep selling products with GMO ingredients, or remove the GMO ingredients. That's how a free market is supposed to work—with informed consumers driving demand. But unless laws mandate these labels, corporations can choose not to label, or they can tell consumers they will label, but then set their own "standards" for labeling which could include high thresholds and loopholes in order to avoid labeling. "Voluntary" is not an acceptable standard.

Take Action: orgcns.org/1mXQooE