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P10, R12-57

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CITY CLERK
HONOLULU, HAWAII
TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO:
RESOLUTION 12-57

"Urging the State of Hawaii and the United States Food and Drug Administration to require labeling of genetically engineered food."

Council Chair Martin and members of the council:

My name is Alan Takemoto and I thank you for allowing me to testify in opposition to Resolution 12-57.

Resolution 12-57 goes over and beyond just labeling for the public's "right to know", but rather it is a resolution that is an anti-gmo and anti-science measure that creates unnecessary fear and confusion for the consumer. As we all know, the word "GMO" has a negative connotation that instills fear. Those that are in favor of this resolution are philosophically opposed to GMO and, therefore, want to provoke unsubstantiated fear into the public. Please reject this resolution on the basis that there is no scientific data that prompts such a label for the following reasons:

- **GMO CROPS ARE SAFE AND NO DIFFERENT:** The FDA has determined that where genetically-modified crops don't differ from non-GM crops, that products containing them don't have to be labeled. FDA does require the product to be labeled if the ingredient is a potential allergen, or somehow changes the nutritional properties of the food. To date, no approved biotech crop is either an allergen, or has any significant nutritional differences from non-GM counterparts.
- **UNDERMINE LABELING LAWS AND CONSUMER CONFIDENCE:** Requiring labeling for ingredients that don't pose a health issue would undermine both our labeling laws and consumer confidence.
- **MANDATORY LABELING WOULD BE COSTLY:** Ensuring that such labeling is accurate would also put a huge burden on state regulatory agencies.
- **VOLUNTARY LABELING ENSURES CONSUMER CHOICE:** Individuals who make a personal decision not to consume food containing GM ingredients can easily avoid such products. In the U.S., they can purchase products that are certified as organic under the National Organic Program. They can also buy products which companies have voluntarily labeled as not containing GM ingredients. The law allows for voluntary labeling so long as the information is accurate, truthful and avoids misleading consumers about the food.

I respectfully ask that you oppose and hold this resolution.

Thank you.

COUNCIL

MISC. COM. 1009