



**Hawaii Farm Bureau**  
F E D E R A T I O N

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The Honorable Ernie Martin, Chair  
and Members  
Honolulu City Council  
530 South King Street, Room 202  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

RECEIVED  
CITY CLERK  
C & C OF HONOLULU  
2012 APR 24 AM 11:50

Dear Chair Martin and Councilmembers:

Re: Resolution 12-57

I am Dean Okimoto, President of the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation (HFBF). Organized since 1948, the HFBF is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide, and serves as Hawaii's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate and advance the social, economic and educational interest of our diverse agricultural community.

We strongly oppose Resolution 12-57 which requests the State of Hawaii and the U.S. Federal Drug Administration to require labeling.

Genetic engineering is an important tool for many farmers across our nation that increases production with less land, inputs and resources. Hawaii plays a critical role in supporting the research and development that many famers benefit from and thus allows us to feed the growing population. We need to continue to be at the cutting edge of science and technology for farmers to meet worldwide food demand. Hawaii should and must play a critical role in that effort.

Genetic engineering is regulated by USDA, FDA, and EPA. There has been no evidence that there is any health or nutritional differences between conventional and genetic engineering. A label of any kind should only be required if there is hard facts and data affecting safety, health or nutritional factors. And there has been none to date. The average consumer does not fully understand how much energy and resources it takes to produce the food that we all enjoy and benefit from today. Many believe that food comes from the grocery store and not from a farm or ranch. Genetic engineering is a part of agriculture that needs to be supported to help farmers succeed and be more productive with less.

Hawaii's papaya industry was saved by genetic engineering. The papaya ring spot virus devastated the industry and forced many farmers out of business. Genetic engineering was the last resort and now the papaya industry is in full production. We are concerned

that a label for our local papaya farmers will put them at an economic disadvantage with imported and sometimes foreign products entering the state.

The State does not have the resources nor capability to oversee and regulate the millions of food products entering the State. We have about 90% of our food being imported into the State. With the economy still languishing and the state and federal budgets barely meeting the basic support programs, we are now asking them to regulate something that has no known health or safety concerns. The State has difficulty overseeing imported produce that has invasive species and restaurants and stores with food sanitary concerns. Labeling genetic engineering or genetic modified organisms (GMO) has an unfair negative stigmatism that will mislead consumers that there is something wrong with the food product. The GMO label will cause unnecessary fear and concern that we feel is the intent of those that are philosophically against GMO.

Hawaii should be the leader in agricultural science and technology and set the pace for the rest of the world.

Please oppose this resolution