

Mayor Kenoi Signs Bill 113 – Hawaii Bans GMOs!

Posted by Joan Russow

Friday, 06 December 2013 09:56 - Last Updated Friday, 06 December 2013 11:34

By Farm Wars <http://farmwars.info/?p=12060>

Don't label GMOs



Mayor Billy Kenoi signed Bill 113 on December 5, 2013. Below is the message he sent to the Hawai'i County Council:

Aloha, Chair Yoshimoto and Members:

On Nov. 19, 2013 the Hawai'i County Council adopted Bill 113 Draft 3 adding a new article relating to Genetically Engineered Crops and Plants, and on Nov. 21, 2013 delivered the bill to me for my consideration.

After careful deliberation and discussions with members of my administration and the public, I am signing Bill 113. Our community has a deep connection and respect for our land, and we all understand we must protect our island and preserve our precious natural resources. We are determined to do what is right for the land because this place is unlike any other in the world. With this new ordinance we are conveying that instead of global agribusiness corporations, we want to encourage and support community-based farming and ranching.

The debate over this bill has at times been divisive and hurtful, and some of our hard-working farmers who produce food for our community have been treated disrespectfully. We are determined to protect every farmer and rancher. Agriculture on Hawai'i Island will continue to grow with county assistance, investment and support.

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That commitment includes initiatives such as the public-private partnership to improve and expand the Pa‘auilo Slaughterhouse to support our grass-fed beef industry, and the launch of the Kapulena Agricultural Park, the largest agricultural park in the state on 1,739 acres of county-owned land. It also includes support for innovative training programs to grow the farmers of the future, and to train veterans to engage in agriculture on Hawaiian Home Lands, and the introduction and advancement of Korean Natural Farming as a sustainable method of producing healthier crops and livestock. It includes completion of the first-in-the-state Food Self-Sufficiency Baseline Study of Hawai‘i Island to measure the island’s progress toward food self-sufficiency.

We are determined to reunite our farming community to create a stronger and more vibrant agricultural sector. It is time to end the angry rhetoric and reach out to our neighbors. Our farmers are essential to creating a wholesome and sustainable food supply on this island, and they deserve to be treated with respect and aloha. We must turn now to a meaningful, factual dialogue with one another.

With my approval of this bill, our administration will launch a year of research and data collection to investigate factual claims and to seek out new directions that farming in our community should take. This work will include an expanded database detailing the locations of both organic and conventional farms, the crops that are grown, more accurate estimates of the revenue earned from these enterprises, and the challenges our farmers face in meeting food safety and organic certification requirements. We will work with our farmers and our ranchers to carefully monitor the impacts of this bill over the next year to separate speculation and guesswork from the facts.

Today our communities expect that government will be as cautious as possible in protecting our food and water supplies. We all want to minimize impacts to the environment while also producing abundant, affordable food for local consumption. This ordinance expresses the desires and demands of our community for a safe, sustainable agricultural sector that can help feed our people while keeping our precious island productive and healthy.

Aloha,

William P. Kenoi

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MAYOR

<http://hawaiicountymayor.com/2013/12/05/mayor-kenoi-signs-bill-113/>

Summary of Bill

Prohibition: No open air cultivation, propagation or development of genetically engineered crops or plants.

Exemptions: crops or plants being cultivated, propagated or developed prior to the effective date of this article are exempted provided locations or facilities are registered within 90 days.

GMO papaya in current and future locations is exempt provided commercial locations or facilities are registered.

Administration: Department of Research & Development, Agriculture Division.

Registration: \$100 annual registration fee beginning within 90 days of the effective date of article.

Penalties: Violators fined \$1000 per day, per location and responsible for costs of investigation, court and legal costs, and for damage to non-GE crops, plants, neighboring properties or water sources.

gmofreehawaiiisland.org