



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I SYSTEM

TESTIMONY

S.B.#647

RELATING TO GENETIC ENGINEERING

Testimony Presented Before the

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT, AND INTERNATIONAL
AFFAIRS

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, AND AGRICULTURE

February 10, 2005

By

Andrew G. Hashimoto
Dean, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources
University of Hawai'i

Testimony for
Senate Bill 647

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Senate Committee on Water, Land, and Agriculture

The Twenty-third Legislature
State of Hawai'i
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Dr. Andrew G. Hashimoto, Dean
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources
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I am pleased to contribute the expertise of the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) to the decision-making process on Senate Bill 647, which prohibits an entity selling seeds from representing that the product sold is free of genetically engineered material if that entity knows or should know otherwise, or if the director of the Department of Agriculture discovers genetically engineered material.

There is no conclusive scientific evidence to indicate that the process of genetic engineering creates any greater risks for consumers or the environment than does the process of conventional breeding. By the time a genetically engineered organism is deregulated and made available for sale in the U.S., it has already been found by one or more federal agencies to pose no greater risk than conventionally bred organisms. It is considered no different than any other crop cultivar.

Seed producers take measures to isolate their crops from cross-pollination by other cultivars, whether genetically engineered or not. These efforts ensure that the content of a seed package is consistent with its labeling to within the tolerances and limits that the customer requires. However, no seed producer can ensure 100% purity, whether in terms of genetic content or content type (for example, seeds vs. other matter). SB647 establishes standards that are impossible to meet and constitutes an unfunded mandate on HDOA.

We oppose SB647.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.