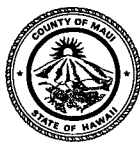


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Vice-Chair
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Council Members
Gladys C. Baisa
Jo Anne Johnson
Sol P. Kaho'ohalahala
Bill Kauakea Medeiros
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Director of Council Services
Ken Fukuoka

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LATE

March 19, 2009

TO: Honorable Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senate Committee on Energy and Environment

FROM: Sol P. Kaho'ohalahala
Councilmember

SUBJECT: **HEARING OF MARCH 19, 2009; TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1663, HD1,
RELATING TO TARO SECURITY**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and offer **support** on this measure. The purpose of this measure is to prohibit the development, testing, propagation, release, importation, planting, or growing of genetically modified Hawaiian taro in the state. As well, this measure prohibits certain activities as it relates to genetically modified non-Hawaiian varieties of taro.

The Maui County Council has not had the opportunity to take a formal position on this measure. Therefore, I am providing this testimony in my capacity as an individual member of the Maui County Council.

I **support** this measure for all the compelling reasons stated in the bill. When we consider that our ancestors are derived from the kalo plant, actions such as genetic modification essentially equate to actions to alter or modify our kupuna.

In addition, in our failure to protect our environment from the importation of invasive pests & diseases, genetic remedy is presented as the salvation to this threat. We need to treat the cause rather than the symptoms.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **support** of this measure.

From: FOSTER, RAY [AG/2004] [ray.foster@monsanto.com]
Sent: Thursday, March 19, 2009 3:29 PM
To: ENETestimony
Cc: Maum, Donald (DG)
Subject: Molokai Farm Bureau Supports HB 1663

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

Sen. Mike Gabbard, Chair
Sen. Kalani English, Vice Chair
Date: Thursday, March 19
Time: 3:45 p.m.
Room: 225

LATF

Re: Testimony in Support of HB 1663

Honorable Senators Gabbard, English and Committee Members

The Molokai Farm Bureau values and respects the spiritual and cultural significance of taro to native Hawaiians. This bill addresses those legitimate concerns raised by the Native Hawaiian community.

We have seen the decimation of taro in Samoa, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and the Solomon Islands from diseases, pests, and global warming. HB 1663 allows these countries to continue to seek out the expertise of Hawaii's researchers because they see the value in the tools of biotechnology to address the many agricultural challenges in their communities.

Anti GMO activists have said: "Hopefully this moratorium will lead to not only a BAN on GMO taro, but ALL GMOs in Hawaii and elsewhere." HB 1663 HD 1 clarifies that this is not a referendum on biotechnology and should not be used to further the extreme anti-GMO agendas of a vocal minority by banning research on ALL varieties of taro.

Please honor the compromise offered in the House Draft.

Respectfully submitted

Molokai Farm Bureau

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From: FOSTER, RAY [AG/2004] [ray.foster@monsanto.com]
Sent: Thursday, March 19, 2009 1:08 PM
To: ENETestimony
Subject: Committee on Energy and Environment - Support HB 1663 as written

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

Sen. Mike Gabbard, Chair
Sen. Kalani English, Vice Chair
Date: Thursday, March 19
Time: 3:45 p.m.
Room: 225

LATE

Re: Support of House Bill 1663 as written

Honorable Senators Gabbard, English and Committee Members

I am a Hawaii resident with the highest of respect for the spiritual and cultural significance of taro to native Hawaiians. HB1663 addresses those concerns raised by the Native Hawaiian community in relation to genetic engineering and their culture. We have seen the decimation of taro in Samoa, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and the Solomon Islands from diseases, pests, and global warming. This bill allows these countries to continue to seek out the expertise of Hawaii's researchers because they see the value in the tools of biotechnology to address the many agricultural challenges in their communities. The anti GMO activists have tagged their unfounded campaign against responsible science and agriculture to the sacred history of the Hawaiian people - an unconscionable act in my opinion. They have stated their intentions to ban not only GMO taro but "all GMO's in Hawaii and elsewhere". The benefit of this technology in food production for the world has been demonstrated without question. HB 1663 HD 1 clarifies that this is not a referendum on biotechnology and should not be used to further the extreme anti-GMO agendas of a vocal minority by banning research on ALL varieties of taro. Please honor the compromise offered in the house draft of HB1663.

Respectfully,

Raymond Foster

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LATE

tarotestimony.txt

Dear Chair Senator Mike Gabbard,

Thank you for this opportunity to testify for HB 1663 HD1 as amended. I respectfully ask you and your committee members to pass HB 1663 HD1 to prohibit genetic engineering of Hawaiian taro varieties only. This bill is a good compromise that respects the cultural beliefs of native Hawaiians while allowing needed research using all available technologies to improve disease resistance of non-native taro varieties.

There are deadly diseases in the South Pacific that could wipe out taro production in Hawaii if they ever reach our islands. Scientists need to be allowed to conduct pro-active research to improve disease resistance on non-Hawaiian taro varieties using all available technologies, before a crisis situation exists. It took only 15 years after accidental introduction of the Alomae-Bobone viral complex to wipe out taro production in Makira Island in the Solomon Islands. All Hawaiian taro varieties have been tested and all are susceptible to the Alomae-Bobone viral complex.

The Kauai Taro Grower's Association (largest commercial taro growing organization in Hawaii) has come out strongly in support of research to improve taro production using all available technologies for non-Hawaiian taro varieties. Please support taro farmers by voting for HB 1663 HD 1. Please do NOT amend it to prohibit genetic engineering research on all taro varieties.

Thank you.

Terry Leong
Maureen Fitch
Xiaoling He