
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. Referred to by native Hawaiians as kalo, taro
2 (Colocasia esculenta) is a crop of great cultural and spiritual
3 significance to Hawaii's indigenous people, the kanaka maoli.
4 More than simply a highly-prized food staple, the kalo plant is
5 also considered to be the divine ancestor of man. As documented
6 in the kumulipo, the sacred Hawaiian genealogical chant charting
7 the creation of the universe, the sky father, Wakea, and the
8 earth mother, Papa, conceived a daughter named Hoohokulani, with
9 whom Wakea later conceived a second, stillborn son named Haloa-
10 naka. Out of his grave grew the first kalo plant. Soon
11 thereafter, Wakea and Hoohokulani had a second son, also called
12 Haloa, who became the first human being. Therefore, in kinship
13 terms, taro is the elder brother of the Hawaiian people,
14 nourishing and watched over them for generations.

15 This spiritual relationship between kalo and the kanaka
16 maoli is expressed metaphorically in the concept of 'ohana, the
17 Hawaiian word for family. Like the family system, taro sprouts
18 forth from a single root which, when finally harvested, is



1 reborn yet again via root cuttings that are broken off and then
2 replanted for the next season. Thus, in Hawaiian epistemology,
3 life itself will not die so long as the living waters of the
4 soul continue to nourish it. As testament to the strength of
5 this world view, native Hawaiian farmers have used their
6 horticultural skills to successfully maintain roughly seventy
7 varieties of taro, the majority of which are unique to the
8 Hawaiian islands.

9 The cultivation of kalo, then, intrinsically ties the
10 interdependency of the past, present, and future as the essence
11 of procreation and regeneration, thereby forming the foundation
12 for any sustainable practice. Kalo not only expresses the
13 spiritual and physical wellbeing of the kanaka maoli and their
14 heritage, but also symbolizes the environmental, social, and
15 cultural values important to the state. This relationship is
16 symbolized in the use of the kalo plant upon the crown of King
17 Kalakaua and, today, in the logo of the office of Hawaiian
18 affairs, along with many commercial enterprises across the
19 state.

20 The purpose of this Act is to acknowledge, preserve, and
21 perpetuate the importance and use of kalo in the heritage of the
22 state by establishing a five-year moratorium on the testing,



1 propagating, cultivating, raising, and growing of genetically
2 modified taro in Hawaii.

3 SECTION 2. Chapter 321, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
4 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated
5 and to read as follows:

6 "§321- Genetically modified taro; moratorium. (a) No
7 genetically modified taro shall be tested, propagated,
8 cultivated, raised, or grown in the state.

9 (b) As used in this section:

10 "Genetically modified" means alterations to a life form or
11 its living progeny at the nucleic acid level, using the
12 techniques collectively referred to as recombinant DNA
13 technology.

14 "Recombinant DNA technology" means the transfer of genes,
15 regulatory sequences, or nucleic acid between hosts by the use
16 of vectors or laboratory manipulations and includes the
17 insertion, excision, duplication, inactivation, or relocation of
18 specific genes, regulatory sequences, or sections of nucleic
19 acid. This term does not apply to a material or an organism
20 developed exclusively through traditional methods of breeding,
21 hybridization, or nondirected mutagenesis.

22 (c) This section shall be repealed on June 30, 2012."



1 SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.

2 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2007.



Report Title:

Genetically Modified Organisms; Taro; Moratorium

Description:

Provides a 5-year moratorium on testing, propagating, cultivating, growing, and raising genetically engineered taro.
(HB704 HD2)

