



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I SYSTEM

## TESTIMONY

S.B.#1036

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

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Dean, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources  
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Testimony for  
Senate Bill 1036

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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  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

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 1036, which provides for strict liability for injuries caused by the release of genetically engineered organisms from plant sources.

Genetically engineered (GE) crops are regulated by three federal agencies: the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). During the development of a GE crop, USDA regulates its interstate movement and field testing. For a GE crop to be deregulated, USDA must find that its release will not adversely affect non-target (i.e., non-pest) organisms or the environment. For GE crops that produce biological pesticides, EPA establishes the level of pesticide that is safe for the environment and for human consumption. If the GE crop is to be consumed by people or animals, FDA participates in the regulatory process, determining whether the GE crop is substantially equivalent to conventional varieties of the same crop in terms of nutritional value and toxicity.

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. The additional level of state regulation that SB1036 adds to these federal regulations is unnecessary.

CTAHR believes that biotechnology is just one of many agricultural tools. As we try to help our farmers solve problems, we use conventional breeding techniques, integrated

pest management, organic production methods, and genetic engineering. We strongly believe that conventional agriculture and biotechnology can coexist and that all approaches will play an important role in helping Hawai'i farmers in the future.

We oppose SB1036.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.