

## 'Big Island' on Hawaii passes bill banning GMOs, exempts GM papayas

By a 6-3 vote, the Hawaii County Council passed Bill 113 on November 19 that prohibits all new genetically altered crops, effectively blocking [biotech companies](#) from taking up root on the Big Island. Violators could be fined \$1000 a day.

The 200 or so [papaya farmers](#) on the Big Island, who grow genetically modified papaya, are exempt from the bill. Mayor Billy Kenoi has 10 days to sign the bill, veto it or or take no action, in which case it would automatically become law. He has not indicated what he might do. However, if he does exercise his veto powers, it is believed there are enough votes to override a veto.

The bill's passage comes just days after the Hawaiian island of [Kauai pushed forward legislation that severely increases regulations of biotech companies](#).

Dean Okimoto, president of the Hawaii Farm Bureau, said that while the bill targets large biotech, it could end up hurting small farmers down the road. "How can you say you can only farm what you are farming now?" he said. "You may be [putting guys out of business by restricting what they can and cannot use](#) going forward. The cattle guys are depending on trying to develop a drought resistant grass."

GMO supporters have said they may challenge the new law in court if enacted. While the state Attorney General's Office has declined to give an opinion, county Corporation Counsel Lincoln Ashida has said the county has the legal authority to enact the law.

**Read the full, original story here:** Council Passes GMO bill

### Additional Resources:

- [Trouble in Paradise? Will the GMO debate consume Hawaii?](#), Civil Beat
- [Kaua'i Goes rogue, anti-GMO bill passed over mayor's veto, contentious legal fight imminent](#), Genetic Literacy Project
- [Hawaii GMO corruption scandal? Genetic Literacy Project investigation underway](#)