

## Hawaii County's Bill 113 'needlessly stigmatizes' papaya farmers

"Bill 113 needlessly stigmatizes our papaya farmers...it penalizes them as well," writes Michael Shintaku, professor of plant pathology at the University of Hawaii-Hilo College of Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources Management.

According to the recently signed Bill 113, all open-air cultivation of genetically modified plants is banned, except for farmers growing GM papayas. These farmers will have to register their papaya farms, noting their exact location, and pay \$100 per location per year.

Other plants grown in Hawaii are potentially dangerous—such as toxic ornamental plants or even common fruits that naturally produce cyanide—but growers of those plants are not required to register their farms or pay a fine. "This bill is based on the premise that transgenic crops are dangerous," Shintaku writes. Transgenic crops have been "singled out" as posing a unique threat, although Councilwoman Margaret Wille, who spearheaded the bill, "fails to articulate what that threat is."

"Biotechnology is not going away, and as the products get better and better, our country has decided to shut the door on all of it based on inarticulate fear."

**Read the full, original story: Bill 113's Stigmatization of GMOs and Papaya Farmers is Misguided and Wrong**