

Proposed Maui GMO ban would shut farms, spike unemployment, cost millions

Hawaii's rising movement against genetically modified farming has seen successes in Kauai County and Hawaii County, but the latest proposal in Maui County will test how far residents are willing to go to get rid of genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

The Maui County Council — which represents Maui, Molokai and Lanai — recently began considering the county's first-ever citizens initiative, which seeks to temporarily ban genetically modified farming until biotechnology companies pay for a study to analyze its health effects. Critics say the proposal could have a huge negative economic impact in the county, where hundreds of people are employed by the biotechnology industry.

The voter initiative is significantly more restrictive than the regulations approved in Kauai County and Hawaii County last year. Kauai's ordinance focuses on increasing disclosure requirements for biotechnology companies about their use of pesticides and genetically engineered seeds, while the Big Island's ban on genetically modified farming exempts all existing crops.

In contrast, the Maui County proposal would ban most of the farming done by both Monsanto Company and Mycogen Seeds, an affiliate of DowAgroSciences, in addition to that of other farmers who rely on genetically modified seeds.

The state Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism doesn't keep specific data on the biotechnology agriculture industry in Hawaii, but data from Monsanto Company and Mycogen Seeds indicates that the county could lose millions of dollars in tax revenue and face a spike in unemployment if the companies were to close their genetically modified farming operations.

Read the full, original article: [A high-stakes initiative could ban GMO farming in Maui County](#)