

New Zealand's Environment Court says local governments must take 'precautionary approach' to GMO adoption

Opponents of the use of genetic engineering are hailing a recent [New Zealand] Environment Court decision as "a victory for common sense".

On April 12, the Environment Court ruled in favour of the Whangarei District Council's case against the wording of the Northland Regional Council's genetically modified organisms policy in its Regional Policy Statement (RPS).

The court said the policy required a precautionary approach towards introducing genetically engineered organisms generally to the environment – not just plants, as the RPS stated.

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"The court's decision is a victory for common sense and for the interests of all Northlanders concerned about the possible introduction of GMOs into the environment, whether they be plants, animals, insects or microorganisms," Soil & Health chair Graham Clarke said.

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However, Northern Regional Council regulatory services policy development manager Ben Lee said the Environment Court decision does not effectively ban genetically modified organisms in Northland.

"It directs councils, when considering the management of GMOs, to adopt a precautionary approach. At this stage we don't know what the outcome might be – a ban is one possible outcome."

The council was currently in the process of developing a new regional plan for Northland which would set policies and rules for managing GMOs as part of that process.

Read full, original post: [Court rules all organisms to be included in councils' GE policies](#)