

# Resolution

No. \_\_\_\_\_

## URGING SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL NO. 958, RELATING TO GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS

WHEREAS, Senate Bill No. 958, currently pending before the Hawaii State Legislature, will impose a ten-year moratorium on developing, testing, propagating, cultivating, growing, and raising genetically-engineered taro in the State; and

WHEREAS, kalo, the Hawaiian word for taro, is a culturally significant plant to the kanaka maoli, Hawaii's indigenous peoples; and

WHEREAS, kalo is an integral part of the Native Hawaiian culture and represents Haloa, the elder brother of man, and genetically altering the structure of the taro plant represents a defilement of the genealogical link between the two; and

WHEREAS, today, there remain approximately 85 varieties of kalo out of the hundreds that were known in Hawaii and, of these, the majority, approximately 69 varieties, are unique to the Hawaiian islands due to the horticultural skills of native Hawaiian farmers; and

WHEREAS, farmers, Hawaiian groups, and private individuals have expressed their concerns that genetically-modified taro will destroy the genetic strains of native taro species, and is disrespectful of the cultural foundation taro holds for Native Hawaiians and their religious practices; and

WHEREAS, kalo is a healthy and nutritious staple in the diets of many residents throughout the State of Hawaii; and

WHEREAS, the important cultural relationship between kalo and the kanaka maoli expresses the spiritual and physical well-being of not only the kanaka maoli and their heritage, but also symbolizes the environmental, social, and cultural values important to the State of Hawaii; and

WHEREAS, kalo continues to have tremendous agricultural, cultural, and traditional significance to the residents of our County and State; and

## Resolution No. \_\_\_\_\_

WHEREAS, cross-pollination of genetically-modified kalo would place an immeasurable threat on traditional varieties; and

WHEREAS, the amount of usable land for raising kalo is scarce in the County of Maui, and any negative impact would devastate the kalo industry in the County of Maui; and

WHEREAS, experimenting with the genetic engineering of this crop, without thoroughly examining and evaluating the adverse effects of that process, is careless and could have far-reaching, irreversible, and unintended consequences; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of Senate Bill No. 958 is to recognize the importance of kalo in the heritage of the State, by creating a ten-year moratorium on developing, testing, propagating, cultivating, growing, and raising of genetically-engineered kalo in the State of Hawaii; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the County of Maui:

1. That it hereby urges support of Senate Bill No. 958, which will protect the biological lifeblood of the State from irreparable harm; and
2. That certified copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Honorable Charmaine Tavares, Mayor, County of Maui; the Honorable Linda Lingle, Governor, State of Hawaii; the State House of Representatives; the State Senate; Sandra Lee Kunimoto, Director, State Department of Agriculture; Andrew Hashimoto, Dean, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR), University of Hawaii at Manoa; Harold Keyser, CTAHR, Maui Community College; Penny Levin; Steven Hookano; Pauahi Hookano; Victor Pellegrino; and Walter Ritte.