
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

HONORING THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII FOR ITS RESPECTFUL ACTIONS TO
ASSIGN ITS THREE PATENTS ON TARO TO THE GREATER NATIVE
HAWAIIAN COMMUNITY AND SUPPORTING STATE FUNDING FOR THE
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII TO FURTHER RESEARCH AND DEVELOP A
MEANS TO IDENTIFY GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS.

1 WHEREAS, the University of Hawaii has come to both
2 recognize and appreciate the significance and the unique place
3 that taro occupies as the embodiment of the most sacred of the
4 Hawaiian gods in the lives and culture of the native Hawaiian
5 community and to that end, has placed a high priority on the
6 treatment of taro in a culturally sensitive and appropriate
7 manner; and

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9 WHEREAS, in 2002, three patents were granted to the
10 University of Hawaii from work conducted in the 1990s at the
11 request of Samoan taro growers to address the near eradication
12 of their taro crops to a leaf blight. A number of cultivars
13 were developed from crosses of Hawaiian and Palauan taro strains
14 -- the latter obtained specifically for this purpose with the
15 consent (including proper permitting) of Palauan taro growers
16 and Palauan government officials; and

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18 WHEREAS, using traditional breeding techniques, the
19 University produced three strains that were shown to have
20 increased disease resistance; and

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22 WHEREAS, on May 16, 2006, the University of Hawaii
23 unequivocally stated its intention, in the case of the three
24 patents the University holds on taro -- which are not
25 genetically modified -- to make an exception to the University's
26 standard policy of holding all patents; and

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28 WHEREAS, on June 2, 2006, the University of Hawaii
29 announced that it would assign the three patents related to



1 development of disease resistant taro to the greater native
2 Hawaiian community; and

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4 WHEREAS, the effort to incorporate bioengineered organisms
5 into the environment, the supply chain, and particularly into
6 the food supply is often met with resistance by retailers and
7 consumers for a variety of reasons; and

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9 WHEREAS, a method to effectively identify bioengineered
10 organisms in the field, the laboratory, and in the market in a
11 reliable, non-destructive, and non-disruptive way would
12 substantially mitigate consumers' fear and uncertainty; and

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14 WHEREAS, the University of Hawaii has recently made
15 advances in the use of green fluorescent protein as a reliable
16 genetic marker and, when combined with sensor technology being
17 developed by the Maui Media Lab, may provide this identification
18 to detect bio-organisms expressing fluorescent green protein in
19 a non-invasive and non-destructive way; and

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21 WHEREAS, this identification technique would provide
22 enhanced protection to the natural biodiversity of the
23 environment, while ensuring the integrity and increasing the
24 value of the local food supply chain by empowering consumers
25 with regard to identification of bioengineered organisms; and

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27 WHEREAS, in the application of an identification technique,
28 scientists benefit by being able to monitor and protect the
29 integrity and diversity of the natural biosphere; producers
30 benefit by being able to track their products from the field to
31 the markets; retailers benefit by being able to increase sales
32 to informed consumers and reduce costs from fewer product
33 returns; consumers benefit by gaining an informed choice of
34 products; now, therefore,

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36 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
37 Twenty-fourth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular
38 Session of 2008, the Senate concurring, that the Legislature
39 honors the University of Hawaii for its respectful actions to
40 assign its three patents on taro to the greater native Hawaiian
41 community; and

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43 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature supports state
44 funding for the University of Hawaii to further research and



1 develop affordable, nearly instantaneous, and simple methods for
 2 genetically modified organisms stacked with genetic tags to be
 3 identified in the field, in the market, in distribution, and in
 4 the natural environment; and

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 6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the University of Hawaii is
 7 encouraged to further develop methods to clearly, objectively,
 8 and authentically identify natural organisms and genetically
 9 modified organisms husbanded within or imported or exported to
 10 or from the State by means such as the use of green fluorescent
 11 protein genetic markers in support of the integrity of the
 12 State's natural biodiversity; and

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 14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
 15 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the President and the
 16 Chair of the Board of Regents of the University of Hawaii, the
 17 Keawanui Convention, the Executive Director of the Maui Media
 18 Lab, and the Hawaiian Learning Center.

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OFFERED BY: _____

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