



County of Santa Cruz

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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JANET K. BEAUTZ
FIRST DISTRICT

ELLEN PIRIE
SECOND DISTRICT

MARDI WORMHOUDT
THIRD DISTRICT

TONY CAMPOS
FOURTH DISTRICT

MARK W. STONE
FIFTH DISTRICT

AGENDA: 6/13/06

June 8, 2006

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
County of Santa Cruz
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

RE: SENATE BILL 1056 - GENETICALLY MODIFIED AGRICULTURE

Dear Members of the Board:

Attached is a copy of Senate Bill 1056, authored by Senator Florez, which is set for hearing in the Assembly Agriculture Committee on June 14, 2006. This bill was amended after passing the Senate to effectively eliminate local control over genetically engineered seeds and nursery plants. SB 1056 is a so-called state preemption bill and will amend the California Seed Law so that all decisions pertaining to the regulation of seeds and nursery plants are made at the state level "to the exclusion of local governments."

As you know, this Board, at our meeting on June 6, 2006, and based on substantial evidence submitted by the subcommittee established to consider the subject, unanimously voted to establish a precautionary moratorium. The subcommittee's report not only documented the potential dangers from unregulated genetically engineered crops, but the lack of sufficient federal or state regulation as well. As you will remember, no testimony was presented in opposition to the findings of the County's subcommittee. We were convinced that action by our Board was both necessary and important.

SB 1056 has been held in the Assembly Agriculture Committee since the fall of last year. It now appears that an attempt is in the works to move it forward. While other counties have considered, and in some cases approved, regulating and prohibiting genetically engineered farming, and State action to regulate in this area is justified, simply preempting the issue without such regulation is not only unreasonable but a threat to the public health as well.

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June 8, 2006
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Therefore, we recommend that the Board adopt the attached resolution opposing Senate Bill 1056.

Sincerely,



MARDI WORMHOUDT, Supervisor
Third District



MARK W. STONE, Supervisor
Fifth District

MW/MWS:ted
Attachments

cc: Assembly Member John Laird
Assembly Member Simon Salinas
Senator Joe Simitian
Assembly Agriculture Committee
Assembly Natural Resources Committee
Governor Schwarzenegger
Public Health Commission
Genetically Engineered Committee
Environmental Health
Lisa Bunin

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BEFORE THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
OF THE COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

RESOLUTION NO.

On the motion of Supervisor
duly seconded by Supervisor
the following resolution is adopted

RESOLUTION OPPOSING THE PASSAGE OF SENATE BILL **1056**

WHEREAS, Senate Bill **1056** is a so-called state preemption bill, intended to amend the California Seed Law so that all decisions pertaining to the regulation of seeds and nursery plants are made at the state level "to the exclusion of local governments"; and

WHEREAS, Senate Bill **1056** takes away the democratic right of people to locally resolve matters related to community food systems and agriculture; and

WHEREAS, if passed, cities and counties would be prohibited from enacting stronger protections, even if the local laws were more regionally appropriate; and

WHEREAS, the adoption of Senate Bill **1056** would take away local decision-making power for regulating most aspects of agriculture from communities; and

WHEREAS, Senate Bill **1056** is part of a larger national trend to undo local laws that regulate more strictly than state laws a range of business activities, including agriculture; and

WHEREAS, to date, 19 "seed preemption" bills have been introduced in various states, and 14 have passed into law; and

WHEREAS, Senate Bill **1056** represents an attempt to impede efforts by local governments to protect their residents from threats posed by the growing of Genetically Engineered (GE) foods and crops; and

WHEREAS, Senate Bill **1056** remains silent on the GE issue and fails to address the range of public health, food safety, environmental, and economic concerns associated with GE; and

WHEREAS, Senate Bill **1056** prohibits local governments from adopting regulations requiring GE seeds and food grown within their jurisdiction to be labeled as such or to require the growers of GE crops to notify their neighbors; and

WHEREAS, if passed, Senate Bill **1056** would supersede existing local regulations that prohibit GE agriculture, making them null and void; and

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RESOLUTION OPPOSING THE PASSAGE OF SENATE BILL 1056

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WHEREAS, as the GE bans in Mendocino, Trinity, and Marin Counties demonstrate, a growing number of people in California feel dissatisfied with the minimal environmental and health protections afforded them by current GE laws; and

WHEREAS, state preemption laws, such as Senate Bill 1056, represent an undemocratic departure from the original intent of state law-making by stripping local governments of their authority to act in the best interests of their community; and

WHEREAS, the "one size fits all" approach to agricultural policy-making embodied in Senate Bill 1056 is predicated on the assumption that an agricultural policy that is suitable for Kern County will work in Mendocino, Los Angeles, and all other counties across the state; and

WHEREAS, this approach will simply not work given the vastly different geographical, economic, environmental, and cultural considerations that policymakers must consider when governing in the diverse regions that characterize the State of California; and

WHEREAS, the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors established a subcommittee to study this issue and has received an extremely well documented report and recommendation for action; and

WHEREAS, the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors recognizes the potential threat to the public health of county residents from the unregulated use of genetically modified agriculture.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors strongly opposes SB 1056 and urges its defeat.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Cruz, State of California, this _____ day of _____, 2006, by the following vote:

AYES : SUPERVISORS
NOES : SUPERVISORS
ABSENT: SUPERVISORS

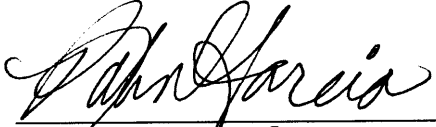
MARK W. STONE, Chair
Board of Supervisors

ATTEST : _____
Clerk of said Board

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RESOLUTION OPPOSING THE PASSAGE OF SENATE BILL 1056
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Approved as to form:



County Counsel

DISTRIBUTION: Assembly Member John Laird
Assembly Member Simon Salinas
Senator Joe Simitian
Assembly Agriculture Committee
Assembly Natural Resources Committee
Governor Schwarzenegger
Public Health Commission
Genetically Engineered Subcommittee
Environmental Health
Lisa Bunin

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