GMO Labeling Organization Sets Up Shop in Hawaii

HONOLULU (AP) — A national organization promoting the labeling of genetically modified foods has opened an office in Honolulu.

The Center for Food Safety has also established a local political action committee and will get involved in state elections this summer, Hawaii News Now [1]reported.

The Center for Food Safety helped draft a new law in Vermont requiring labeling.

Many in Hawaii have questioned how labeling would be implemented at a state level, said Ashely Lukens, the Honolulu program director. Vermont is going to start answering some of those questions, she said.

Lukens believes increased awareness means Hawaii could follow Vermont's lead, perhaps as soon as next year.

"With that community energy here in Hawaii, it is inevitable that we will see labeling," Lukens said.

Hawaii lawmakers have failed to pass labeling legislation in the past. Opponents say labeling would be hard to enforce, cost more for consumers and isn't necessary.

"Targeting genetically modified foods with mandatory labeling gives the impression that they are more harmful then non-GM foods, which there is no scientific evidence to support," said Kirby Kester, president-elect of the Hawaii Crop Improvement Association.

The Center for Food Safety, which is based in the District of Columbia, isn't a stranger to the islands. It has supported a new Kauai County law regulating pesticides and genetically modified crops.

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[1] http://bit.ly/1jFuXnx