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New Kaua'i Law Aims to Protect Children from Pesticides

Broad coalition also works to advance Right to Know on island
through legislation introduced today

LIHUE, HI— Following increasing evidence about the harms of pesticides, and the growing encroachment of pesticide manufacturers on the Garden Island, a broad coalition of mothers, health professionals and farmers, called the **Pass the Bill** campaign, introduced a new law today, Bill 2491 “Relating to Pesticides and Genetically Modified Organisms,” that would better protect children and families on Kaua'i from harmful chemicals.

The bill is focused on the impacts of “[restricted use](#)” pesticides and related agricultural practices on the Garden Island. It creates a disclosure process for the island's largest users of restricted use pesticides, provides for buffer zones, a ban on open air testing of experimental pesticides and experimental GMO crops, and several other measures intended to protect health and safety. The bill does not apply to over 99% of the island's conventional farmers who may routinely use restricted use pesticides, as they use only small amounts that would not trigger disclosure.

“This bill is about the [heaviest users](#) of restricted use pesticides,” said Gary Hooser, co-sponsor of Bill 2491, “We care very much about supporting the success of our local farmers, and the thresholds of this bill do not affect them. We must protect our children.”

Records obtained from the Hawaii State Department of Agriculture show 22 restricted use pesticides – approximately 10 tons from 2010 to 2012 – have been used on Kaua’i by GMO companies on the island.

“Pesticide corporations are using Kaua’i as testing grounds for genetically engineered crops and pesticides,” said Kaua’i mother Lorilani Keohokalole-Torio, “We have a right to know what’s being grown on the island and what harmful chemicals are being used in the process. And when pesticides are sprayed, we need protections in place for children.”

Since GE testing began, over 3,000 permits have been granted by USDA for field trials of GE crops in Hawai’i, more than any other state in the nation. In 2012 alone, there were 160 such permits issued on 740 sites. BASF, Dow, DuPont’s subsidiary Pioneer, Monsanto, and Syngenta are increasingly using the Hawaiian Islands as key test sites for their genetically engineered crops and pesticides. Concerned Kauaians point to the fact that GE crops **have driven pesticide use up** across the country over the past sixteen years.

“Pesticide drift and runoff associated with GE crop field tests are especially concerning in small and windy areas, such as in several parts of Kaua’i. Lots of people, including kids, are being exposed to hazardous pesticides, many of which can cause harm to human health even at low levels,” said Bill Freese, science policy analyst at Center for Food Safety. “Policymakers need to take steps to reduce the use of hazardous pesticides, as well as mitigate the problems with pesticide drift and run-off.”

Studies show that children are particularly susceptible to health threats from pesticides, and children on Kaua’i are particularly exposed to drift from GMO test fields where they live, learn and play. **Resulting health impacts** can last a lifetime.

“Pesticides not only have adverse effects on public health and safety from air and water pollution,” said Chris Kobayashi, a Kaua’i taro farmer, “They also contaminate our soils, downstream farms and oceans. We need to support Kaua’i farmers so that they are able to produce clean and healthy foods.” GMO use of public lands and water precludes use of the state’s agricultural resources for more sustainable use.

Kauaians are also not alone in their efforts. **Concerned Hawaiians on the Big Island are also pushing** for a comprehensive ban on GMO crops, following successful efforts to limit GMO taro and coffee. Throughout the world, dozens of countries have banned the use of at least some GMO crops. For example, this spring, Peru passed a ban on GMOs for the next ten years. And other U.S. counties, including Lake, Mendocino, Marin and Trinity Counties in California, have banned the planting of GMO crops.

Draft Bill 2491 can be viewed at:

http://kauai.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=2&event_id=27&meta_id=46503

or by [clicking here](#).

For more information call the Pass the Bill Media Coordinator at 808-651-5098.

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