

Maui Residents Pass Ballot Initiative Requiring Pesticide Companies to Suspend Operations Pending Safety Review:

Residents and Citizen Group Initiate Lawsuit To Assure Transparency and the Proper Implementation Of The Law And To Quell Complaints By Agricultural Giants Monsanto and Dow AgroSciences

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Maui, Hawai`i (November 12, 2014) – Five residents of Maui County, Dr. Lorrin Pang, Mark Sheehan, Lei`ohu Ryder, Bonnie Marsh, Alika Atay, and the SHAKA Movement filed a Complaint in the Circuit Court of the Second Circuit seeking declaratory relief to assure transparency and the proper implementation of the law, and to quell the complaints by agricultural giants Monsanto and Dow AgroSciences. The lawsuit requests that the County take proper measures to implement the new law, including adopting appropriate rules and obtaining the necessary funding. The lawsuit further seeks to establish that the law is enforceable by resolving the claims made by Monsanto and Dow AgroSciences that have recently been publicized in the media questioning the law's enforceability.

“We applaud the county’s recent indication that they will implement the moratorium,” said Mark Sheehan, spokesperson for the citizen group. “However, given the strong prior opposition of the Maui County Council and Mayor’s Office during the campaign, we want to ensure that the citizens of Maui have full access to the implementation process and that the new law is properly administered.”

On November 4th, Maui voters approved a voter initiative to temporarily suspend the growth, testing, or cultivation of genetically engineered crops in Maui until an environmental and public health study can show that they are safe. The opposition, almost exclusively backed by Monsanto and Dow AgroSciences, spent \$7,970,686.12 on the campaign, \$362.22 per vote earned, or \$174.43 per total vote cast – the most money that has ever been expended on a local initiative in the State of Hawai`i.

Presently, Hawai`i is used as an outdoor laboratory for companies like Monsanto to test genetically engineered crops and their related pesticide use, a practice that

has escaped regulation. In 2013 alone there were 1,124 field test sites; California only hosted 184 sites. Most of these crops are engineered to resist herbicides and pesticides. Testing these crops means repeated spraying of dangerous chemicals near neighborhoods, schools, and waterways.

The citizen group helped to collect over 19,000 signatures to secure the moratorium's place on the November 4th ballot.

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