From: Gary Hooser
To: DLNR.BLNR.Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony on LAND DIVISION Item D. 2 Ke Kauhulu o Mānā v. Board of Land and Natural Resources
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Testimony on LAND DIVISION Item D. 2

NON-ACTION ITEM: Discussion Regarding Hawai‘i Supreme Court Published Opinion in Ke Kauhulu o Mānā v. Board of Land and Natural Resources, No. SCWC18-0000057 (Haw. Aug 26., 2025).

Aloha Chair Chang and Board Members,

I’m submitting this testimony today to share some of what I have learned from my research and experience working directly with Syngenta and related entities.

My hope is that this may be relevant to the Boards discussion surrounding the Supreme Court decision and future environmental review of State lands utilized by this industry.

As a member of the Kauai County Council, I spent 3 years of my life deeply involved with matters relating to the industry’s activities in Hawaii - and I remain involved today.

One of the first things I discovered when I first began meeting with industry representatives was that they frequently were “less than truthful” when responding to my questions about their activities.

When I asked, “What pesticides are you using?” They would often respond, “We only use what every other farmer uses.”

I quickly discovered that this was at best a “half-truth”. After extensive research including multiple UIPA requests, I discovered these companies utilized large amounts of Restricted Use Pesticides (RUP’s) that require a special federal permit.

The research and data collected also revealed clearly that the vast majority of regular farmers do not use RUP’s and if they do, it is in very small amounts.

I found in some cases Syngenta and others were using tons of RUP’s including many that were banned in their own host country. Paraquat is just one of about 2 dozen RUP’s used that is banned in 58 countries but used in Hawaii.

The agrochemical companies also informed me of the importance of their work saying they were “feeding the world”.

Again, I found this statement to be less than truthful as the research showed the corn being grown here in Hawaii was primarily used for ethanol, high fructose corn syrup, and cattle feed.

In fact, corn seed being transported off-island was known to be labeled “not for human consumption”.

Syngenta, it's subsidiaries, and other international agrochemical companies leasing State lands in Hawaii are heavily involved in GMO research. They are required to obtain special federal permits for this research and provide a copy of the permit to the State D.O.H. (who btw does not review or approve but merely files the permit).

I have personally reviewed many of these permits and it is not uncommon for these heavily redacted documents to be stamped, "Caution - Not For Release Into The Natural Environment."

In short, Syngenta, related entities, and similar companies are not like every other farmer - not even close.

They are using dangerous chemical pesticides in large amounts, and they are conducting research that has potentially significant negative environmental impacts.

In the case of Ke Kauhulu o Mānā v. Board of Land and Natural Resources - these activities are being conducted on sensitive state lands adjacent to the shoreline.

I humbly request that the BLNR move quickly to right the wrong and require a proper environmental review of the lands identified in this particular legal action AND to examine all other similar situations now occurring on State agricultural lands, including of course now ADC lands - on all islands.

Sincerely,

Gary Hooser
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Former Director of the Office of Environmental Quality Control (OEQC)
Former State Senator and Kauai Councilmember.