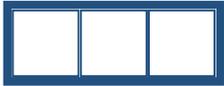


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Pesticide and GMO Companies Spend Big in Hawai'i

Submitted by [Rebekah Wilce \(/users/35294/rebekah-wilce\)](/users/35294/rebekah-wilce) on June 11, 2014 - 8:30am

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Hawai'i has become "ground zero" in the controversy over genetically modified (GMO) crops and pesticides. With the seed crop industry (including conventional as well as GMO crops) reaping [\\$146.3 million](#) (http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Hawaii/Publications/Miscellaneous/SeedEcon.pdf) a year in sales resulting from its activities in Hawai'i, the out-of-state pesticide and GMO firms [Syngenta](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/Syngenta) (<http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/Syngenta>), [Monsanto](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/Monsanto) (<http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/Monsanto>), [DuPont Pioneer](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/Dupont#Overview_.26_history) (http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/Dupont#Overview_.26_history), [Dow Chemical](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/Dow_Chemical_Company) (http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/Dow_Chemical_Company), [BASF](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/BASF) (<http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/BASF>), and [Bayer CropScience](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/Bayer) (<http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/Bayer>) have brought substantial sums of corporate cash into the state's relatively small political arena.

Chemical Conglomerates Retaliate Against Local Democratic Control

These "Big 6" pesticide and GMO firms



(http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/%22Big_6%22_Pesticide_and_GMO_Corporations) are active on the islands in a big way, making use of the three to four annual growing seasons to develop new GMO seeds more quickly. The development of new GMOs by these pesticide and seed conglomerates goes hand-in-hand with heavy pesticide use in some of the islands' experimental crop fields, new data show.

Kaua'i County -- consisting primarily of the island of Kaua'i, known as Hawai'i's "Garden Isle" and home to Waimea Canyon State Park -- passed a [law \(http://truth-out.org/video/item/20170\)](http://truth-out.org/video/item/20170) in November 2013 that [requires disclosure \(http://www.civilbeat.com/2013/11/20426-kauais-gmo-and-pesticide-bill-is-set-to-become-law-after-veto-override/\)](http://www.civilbeat.com/2013/11/20426-kauais-gmo-and-pesticide-bill-is-set-to-become-law-after-veto-override/) of pesticide use and GMO crops sewn by growers and created buffer zones around schools, parks, medical facilities, and private residences. The law is set to go into effect in August 2014.

Hawai'i County [banned GMOs \(http://www.civilbeat.com/2013/11/hawaii-county-council-passes-gmo-ban-2/\)](http://www.civilbeat.com/2013/11/hawaii-county-council-passes-gmo-ban-2/) altogether in November 2013, and a Maui County initiative to ban GMOs recently [obtained enough citizen signatures \(http://www.civilbeat.com/2014/06/maui-initiative-to-ban-gmo-crops-gets-enough-signatures-for-ballot/\)](http://www.civilbeat.com/2014/06/maui-initiative-to-ban-gmo-crops-gets-enough-signatures-for-ballot/) to be placed on the November 2014 ballot.

Since experiencing these setbacks, the big agricultural firms have retaliated in a big way.

Syngenta, DuPont Pioneer, Agrigenetics (doing business as Dow AgroSciences), and BASF have [sued Kaua'i \(http://www.staradvertiser.com/s?action=login&f=y&id=245521921\)](http://www.staradvertiser.com/s?action=login&f=y&id=245521921) to block

its law.

Monsanto, Bayer, Syngenta, DuPont Pioneer, and several associated trade groups spent over \$50,000 lobbying the state legislature from January through April 2014, as legislators considered bills to override the county laws, according to data from the Hawaii State Ethics Commission (as reported through June 6, 2014) analyzed by the Center for Media and Democracy/Progressive Inc. (CMD).

Of these, the Hawai'i Crop Improvement Association (whose [members include](http://www.hciaonline.com/about-hcia/) (<http://www.hciaonline.com/about-hcia/>) Dow AgroScience, Monsanto, Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Syngenta, and BASF) had the highest expenditures at \$10,800; the powerful national trade association the [American Chemistry Council](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/American_Chemistry_Council) (http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/American_Chemistry_Council) (whose [members include](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/American_Chemistry_Council#ACC_Members) (http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/American_Chemistry_Council#ACC_Members) BASF, Bayer, Dow, and DuPont) and Syngenta each spent \$10,000; and Monsanto spent \$8,982.

Big Ag Money Moves to the Ballot

Islanders will vote in a [primary election](http://www.civilbeat.com/2014/06/hawaii-elections-2014-primary-election-ballot/) (<http://www.civilbeat.com/2014/06/hawaii-elections-2014-primary-election-ballot/>) for state legislators, governor, and U.S. Congressmembers August 9. Voters will also make initial choices between candidates for mayor and county council seats on Kaua'i and Maui as well as county council seats on Hawai'i.

The big agricultural corporations Monsanto, Syngenta, Dow, DuPont, and Bayer, associated trade groups, and their lobbyists and employees contributed over \$700,000 to state and county candidates from November 2006 through December 2013, according to a new CMD analysis of Hawaii Campaign Spending Commission data. Initial campaign finance reports for what is shaping up to be an expensive political battle this year are not yet released.

Monsanto was the top donor, with its PAC contributing \$115,500.

Lobbyists -- several of whom have multiple clients besides big ag. interests -- and their spouses contributed over \$550,000.

Top recipients of this special interest largesse include:

- Governor Neil Abercrombie, a well-known and popular liberal Democrat, who received over \$60,000;
- Sen. Clayton Hee (D-23), who [passed GMO labeling out of committee](http://www.civilbeat.com/2013/03/18624-hawaii-fight-over-gmo-labeling-turns-ugly/) (<http://www.civilbeat.com/2013/03/18624-hawaii-fight-over-gmo-labeling-turns-ugly/>) as chair, but who also sponsored [SB 3058](http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/measure_indiv.aspx?billtype=SB&billnumber=3058&year=2014) (http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/measure_indiv.aspx?billtype=SB&billnumber=3058&year=2014) -- one of the bills referred to as Hawai'i's "Monsanto Protection Act" -- and who received \$20,850;
- former Honolulu Mayor and Independent gubernatorial candidate Mufi Hannemann, who received over \$60,000;
- Honolulu Mayor Kirk Caldwell, who received over \$19,000; Sen. Rosalyn Baker (D-6), who received over \$18,000;
- Honolulu City Councilman J. Ikaika Anderson, who received over \$17,000;
- Rep. Kyle Yamashita (D-12), who received over \$17,000;
- Sen. Clarence Nishihara (D-17), who received \$16,893;
- Sen. Josh Green (D-3), who received \$16,892; and
- Sen. Sen. Michelle Kidani (D-18), who received over \$15,000.

Contributing lobbyists include:

- John H. Radcliffe of Capitol Consultants of Hawaii, a "[super lobbyist](http://capitolconsultantsofhawaii.com/articles/Cashing%20In%20Hawaii's%20Top%20Ten%20Campaign%20Donors%20-%20Honolulu%20Civil%20Beat.pdf)" (<http://capitolconsultantsofhawaii.com/articles/Cashing%20In%20Hawaii's%20Top%20Ten%20Campaign%20Donors%20-%20Honolulu%20Civil%20Beat.pdf>) for the American Chemistry Council and Monsanto, among other clients, who with his wife and his other lobbying firm Radcliffe and Associates contributed \$243,718;
- George A. "Red" Morris of Capitol Consultants of Hawaii, who lobbies for the American Chemistry Council, Grocery Manufacturers Association, and Monsanto, among other clients, and with his wife contributed \$237,492;
- Richard Brian Tsujimura of Imanaka Kudo & Fujimoto, who lobbies for the national trade association Biotechnology Industry Organization, among other clients, and contributed \$15,350;
- Alicia Maluafiti of Lo'ihii Communications, who lobbies for the Hawaii Crop Improvement Association, Biotechnology Industry Organization, and CropLife America, among other clients, and with her late husband contributed \$18,300; and
- Frederick Perlak, who lobbies for Monsanto and with his wife contributed \$18,300.

Big Ag Political Funders Have Ties to ALEC

Of the "Big 6" chemical and seed companies and their trade associations lobbying and/or contributing to political candidates in Hawai'i, Bayer, Dow, [CropLife America](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/CropLife_America) (http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/CropLife_America) (a pesticide and agricultural chemical trade association), and the American Chemistry Council have ties to the [American Legislative Exchange Council](http://www.alecexposed.org/wiki/ALEC_Exposed) (http://www.alecexposed.org/wiki/ALEC_Exposed) (ALEC).

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ALEC approved a "model" bill in 2013 for states to override the ability of counties and cities to democratically determine how they will regulate GMOs at the local and regional level, as CMD has reported (<http://prwatch.org/news/2014/05/12486/oregons-gmo-sellout>).

[Bayer](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/ALEC_Corporations#B) (http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/ALEC_Corporations#B) was listed as the [ALEC corporate co-chair](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/ALEC_State_Chairmen) (http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/ALEC_State_Chairmen) of the states of Massachusetts, Nevada, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, and Texas as of 2011; has sponsored several ALEC meetings; has been listed as a [member](http://www.commoncause.org/atf/cf/%7BFB3C17E2-CDD1-4DF6-92BE-BD4429893665%7D/1-35-day_mailing_civil-final%20new%20orleans2.pdf) (http://www.commoncause.org/atf/cf/%7BFB3C17E2-CDD1-4DF6-92BE-BD4429893665%7D/1-35-day_mailing_civil-final%20new%20orleans2.pdf) of the [Civil Justice](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/Civil_Justice_Task_Force) (http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/Civil_Justice_Task_Force) and [Health and Human Services](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/Health_and_Human_Services_Task_Force) (http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/Health_and_Human_Services_Task_Force) task forces; and was a member of ALEC's [Private Enterprise Board](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/ALEC_%22Private_Enterprise%22_Board_of_Director_s) (http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/ALEC_%22Private_Enterprise%22_Board_of_Director_s) through 2012.

[Dow Chemical](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/ALEC_Corporations#D) (http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/ALEC_Corporations#D) has been listed as a member of ALEC's [Energy, Environment, and Agriculture Task Force](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/Energy_Environment_and_Agriculture_Task_Force) (http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/Energy_Environment_and_Agriculture_Task_Force) and has sponsored at least one ALEC meeting.

[CropLife America](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/ALEC_Trade_Groups#C) (http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/ALEC_Trade_Groups#C) has been listed as a member of ALEC's Energy, Environment, and Agriculture Task Force and co-chaired its "Agriculture Subcommittee." This subcommittee adopted Oregon's bill overriding local control over GMO regulation as an official "model" bill in 2013 while CropLife's Jeff Case

was its co-chair, as CMD [has reported \(http://prwatch.org/news/2014/05/12486/oregons-gmo-sellout\)](http://prwatch.org/news/2014/05/12486/oregons-gmo-sellout).

The [American Chemistry Council \(http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/ALEC_Trade_Groups#A\)](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/ALEC_Trade_Groups#A) has also been listed as a member of ALEC's Energy, Environment, and Agriculture Task Force and has sponsored at least one ALEC meeting.

Chemical Company Tactics Inspire More "Democracy in Action"

Barbara Polk, Chair of Common Cause Hawaii -- a state branch of the non-partisan, grassroots organization that strives for open, honest, and accountable government -- told CMD, "The influx of big money and threat of unlimited 'independent expenditures' have resulted in politicians statewide increasingly placing the interests of corporations over the interests of citizens. Politicians are forced to consider the likelihood of facing well-funded opposition and attack ads in the next election if they don't toe the corporate line."

Ashley Lukens, Program Director of the Hawaii Center for Food Safety -- a state office of the environmental advocacy organization that opposes the use of GMOs and harmful pesticides -- adds, "The impact of this corporate cash on local politics is not just that representatives are pressured to vote based on donations to their campaigns. Rather this cash has been strategically spent to create a mirage of confusion and disagreement around very mainstream issues like pesticide disclosure and GMO labeling."

According to a national poll by Consumer Reports released this week, [92 percent \(https://consumersunion.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/2014_GMO_survey_report.pdf\)](https://consumersunion.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/2014_GMO_survey_report.pdf) of U.S. consumers think that GMO food should be labeled before it is sold and meet long-term safety standards set by the government.

"Standing up for something as conservative as transparency around chemical use in Hawai'i is treated as though it is radical," Lukens continued. "This radicalizing of dissent simply serves to silence the majority of the public and keep them from participating publicly in the civic process."

But despite this anti-democratic pressure, Kaua'i County Councilmember and former state

legislator Gary Hooser (D), who co-authored the county's 2013 ordinance requiring disclosure of GMOs planted and pesticides used as well as buffer zones, calls Kaua'i "ground zero" not just for the testing of GMO crops, but also for "democracy in action."

Hooser, who is up for reelection himself this year, told CMD, "A lot of people never involved in politics, activism, or advocacy are getting involved because the big money interests are so in your face. There are candidates running on our side who never thought they'd be running, inspired by the companies' poisoning of our community and control of our government."



This article is part of "[What The Fork!?! Corporations and Democracy](http://wtfcorporations.com/) (<http://wtfcorporations.com/>)," a collaborative media effort investigating corporate control of our democracy and our dinner plates. The articles and radio segments are the combined work of [Making Contact](http://www.radioproject.org/2014/06/g-m-no-genetically-modified-democracy/) (<http://www.radioproject.org/2014/06/g-m-no-genetically-modified-democracy/>), [The Progressive](http://progressive.org/) (<http://progressive.org/>), the Center for Media and Democracy (publisher of [ALECexposed.org](http://alecexposed.org/) (<http://alecexposed.org/>)), and [Food Democracy Now](http://fooddemocracynow.org/) (<http://fooddemocracynow.org/>), along with reporting from [Earth Island Journal](http://www.earthislandjournal.org/) (<http://www.earthislandjournal.org/>), [Grist](http://grist.org/) (<http://grist.org/>), and [Cascadia Times](http://times.org/) (<http://times.org/>). Reporting has been made possible in part by a generous grant from the Voqal Fund. Read stories and more at wtfcorporations.com (<http://wtfcorporations.com/>), and follow #wtfcorps and #BigAg on Twitter and Facebook.

The Center for Food Safety and Earthjustice have [intervened](http://hawaiiindependent.net/story/kauai-gmo-legal-bout-enters-round-two) (<http://hawaiiindependent.net/story/kauai-gmo-legal-bout-enters-round-two>) in the federal case on behalf of the county. Free Speech For People filed an [amicus brief](http://freespeechforpeople.org/sites/default/files/FSFP%20Kauai%20Amicus%20Brief.filed_.pdf) (http://freespeechforpeople.org/sites/default/files/FSFP%20Kauai%20Amicus%20Brief.filed_.pdf) in support of the county, and Progressive Inc. President Lisa Graves is on the group's legal advisory committee.

Candidate committees and non-candidate committees (PACs) aggregate contributions on different reporting cycles, and there are additional discrepancies between what contributions candidate committees report and what contributions non-candidate committees report. CMD has made every effort to control for these issues. In the case of Monsanto, some contributions are reported as being made by the non-candidate committee, and some by "other entity" – these contributions are combined in the above total.

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