



LEGISLATIVE VICTORIES FOR HAWAII'S FOOD SYSTEM

With the support of diverse organizational and community partners, Hawaii Center for Food Safety (HCFS) continues to spearhead the growing call for the State of Hawaii to establish stronger pesticide regulations, while also supporting policies that would promote a safe, healthy, biodiverse local food system for Hawaii. Through research, policy education, grassroots advocacy, and strategic communications, HCFS has emerged as a leading source of information and commentary on key food and agriculture issues in Hawaii. This interim progress report discusses the food and agriculture policy outcomes for the 2016 legislative session.

FIRST STATE-FUNDED TAX CREDIT IN THE U.S. TO SUPPORT ORGANIC FARMING (HB1689)

WHAT THE BILL DOES

- The tax credit is designed to complement existing federal programs that help organic farmers overcome the financial barriers of certification. Coupled with the existing federal cost-share program, Hawaii's new tax credit will reimburse an organic farmer for virtually all costs of organic food production and certification, up to \$50,000.

WHY THE BILL IS IMPORTANT

- The bill will reduce the burden on emerging small farmers seeking costly, but necessary, organic certifications and inspections. It will benefit organic farmers by helping them obtain the price-premium of certified organic products, promote the production of locally-grown food, and stimulate job growth in the agriculture sector.

FUNDING TO SUPPORT AGRICULTURE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE (HB1997)

WHAT THE BILL DOES

- The bill requests an appropriation of \$200,000 out of the state's general revenues for the development, operation, and implementation of the K-12 agriculture workforce development pipeline initiative, including the hiring of one full-time coordinator.

WHY THE BILL IS IMPORTANT

- This program will promote the expansion and development of the State's agricultural industry and workforce by conducting trainings on all islands for teachers and school administrators in agricultural self-sufficiency.

DEFEATING RIGHT TO SPRAY LEGISLATION & PROTECTING COUNTY HOME RULE (HB849)

WHAT THE BILL DOES

- The bill seeks to amend Hawai'i's Right to Farm Act to ensure that counties cannot enact laws, ordinances, or resolutions to limit the rights of farmers and ranchers to engage in agricultural practices.
- If passed, this bill would have stripped counties of their authority to regulate agriculture, while protecting the agrichemical industry's right to experiment with pesticide-promoting genetically engineered crops alongside schools, homes, hospitals, and other sensitive areas.

WHY THE BILL IS PROBLEMATIC

- Every county is different with unique agricultural stakeholders and environments. A one-size-fits-all approach to policymaking does not work for Hawai'i, and decision making needs to rest with the counties in order to best represent and protect the interests of residents.
- The sweeping language of this amendment would invalidate several existing county ordinances that have existed for a long time to protect our unique environment, cultural, and social setting, most importantly county protection to native foods like taro.

HOW THE BILL WAS KILLED

- The agrichemical industry and aligned legislators are the major proponents of this bill, and HCFS mobilized hundreds of citizens in a targeted, grassroots-driven campaign to oppose this undemocratic legislation.
- By mounting strong public pressure on the House Judiciary Committee, the campaign convinced the Committee Chair not to schedule the bill for a hearing, which effectively killed the legislation for the session.

STATE BUDGET APPROPRIATIONS FOR PESTICIDE REGULATION & FARM-TO- SCHOOL EFFORTS (HB1700)

WHAT THE BILL DOES

- Appropriates \$500,000 to implement recommendations published in the Kaua'i Joint-Fact Finding Group Study about pesticide use by large agribusinesses.
- Legislators approved \$98,800 for a full-time Farm-to-School Coordinator position.

WHY THE BILL IS IMPORTANT

- This funding will help the state close gaps in pesticide regulations and implement the recommendations published in the government-sponsored joint fact finding study about pesticide use by large agribusinesses on Kaua'i.
- Among the most vital recommendations in the report are the expansion of mandatory pesticide reporting; the implementation of no-spray buffer zones around schools and sensitive areas; and regular monitoring of human health and the environment for pesticides.
- This appropriation will also support the development of a robust farm-to-school movement.

MORE INFORMATION

Join the Hawai'i Agri-Food Policy Watch to stay up-to-date next session:

bit.ly/foodpolicywatch

Or follow along here:

www.protectourkeiki.org





ADVOCATING FOR STRONGER PESTICIDE REGULATIONS

Hawaii Center for Food Safety (HCFS) continued its campaign to pass legislation that would strengthen the state's regulation and oversight of pesticides. HCFS championed several bills this session, including those that would:

- Establish **no-spray buffer zones** for pesticide around schools and sensitive areas (SB2475);
- Implement a **pilot program to create "green screens" around five schools to act as buffer zones** to protect schools from pesticide drift (HB2564/SB2742);
- Expand **mandatory pesticide disclosure and reporting** programs (HB2574/SB3006); and
- **Protect pollinators** from the harmful impacts of toxic neonicotinoid insecticides (HB1594/SB2268 & HB1687).

Leveraging the voices of our members and partners, the buffer zones and pesticide disclosure bills received support from a broad coalition, earning over one thousand individual written testimonies in support. Although the bills were not passed out of committee, HCFS served as a credible source of information for the public and policymakers, and will continue to participate thoughtfully in public debate, largely manufactured by agrichemical companies, over the need for these policies.

GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED REPORT FINDS MAJOR GAPS IN STATE'S PESTICIDE REGULATIONS

During the 2016 legislative session, the draft results from the Kaua'i Joint Fact Finding Study Group were released for public comment. The report's findings reinforce the need to implement the policy recommendations that HCFS and communities impacted by pesticide drift have been demanding for years. This report will play a pivotal role in motivating and guiding Hawaii's lawmakers and leaders in their work to advance much-needed reforms.

BACKGROUND

In response to growing community concern about the health and environmental impacts of pesticides associated with the agrichemical industry on Kaua'i, the Kaua'i County Council and the Hawaii Department of Agriculture commissioned a joint fact finding study group about the issue. Kaua'i County Council, and the Hawaii Department of Agriculture worked with Peter Adler's Accord 3.0, one of the leading conflict mediation organizations in the state, to bring together a local working group of eight subject-matter experts with diverse viewpoints on the issue, who worked for over 2,000 hours to produce the government-sponsored report.

THE FINDINGS

The report urges the Hawaii Governor, state lawmakers, and several state agencies to work in collaboration to increase protection for those potentially exposed to harmful agrichemicals that drift from application sites.

Major recommendations include:

- Create a pilot program for **pesticide buffer zones around schools**
- Establish permanent, mandatory, statewide expansion of the **Kaua'i Agricultural Good Neighbor Program** that requires large agribusinesses to disclose pesticide use to the public
- Conduct **robust health and environmental monitoring for pesticides** associated with low-level, daily pesticide exposure
- **Update critical health surveillance data** including the birth defect registry

Upon release of the final version of the report this summer, HCFS will continue to work closely with a coalition of environmental organizations and residents from impacted communities to hold the government accountable for the expedient and full implementation of the policies and measures recommended in the report.



ADVANCING REGENERATIVE FARMING & SUSTAINABLE FOOD POLICIES

HCFCS submitted organizational testimony on two dozen progressive food and agriculture bills supported by diverse farming, environmental, and sustainability organizations engaged in advocacy at the state legislature. Although these bills did not pass through the legislative session alive, HCFS plans to provide research, education, and grassroots advocacy support to advance these policies next session:

Funding for an On-farm Mentoring Program (SB2137/HB2584)

Improves food security and self-sufficiency in Hawai'i by encouraging the development and implementation of a whole farm system approach to agriculture.

Ban on Genetically Engineered (GE) Fish (HB686)

Prohibits propagating, cultivating, or farming genetically engineered fish in state marine waters and selling, attempting to sell, or possessing GE fish.

Community Food Forests (HB2581/SB2967)

Establishes a statewide community food forest program to provide sources of healthy food.

Pilot Program to use Korean Natural Farming as a Pest Solution (SB2746/HB2718)

Establishes Korean natural farming pilot program to combat agricultural pests naturally in Hawai'i.

Funding for a Nutrient Cycling Center Pilot Project (SB2138/HB2586)

Creates a nutrient cycling center pilot project on Maui. Nutrient cycling puts end products back into the land-based food chain instead of generating waste or causing pollution as with food waste.

Promoting Hemp as a Viable Agricultural Product for Hawai'i (SB2787)

Provides the authority, procedures, and licensing requirements related to the production of industrial hemp as an agricultural product.

MORE INFORMATION

Join the Hawai'i Agri-Food Policy Watch to stay up-to-date next session:

bit.ly/foodpolicywatch

Or follow along here:
www.protectourkeiki.org

