



Molokai Farm Bureau



An Affiliate of the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation and the American Farm Bureau Federation

October 16, 2017

State Land Use Commission
P.O. Box 2359
Honolulu, HI 96804

SUBJECT: DR17-60 Monsanto Company, A Delaware Corporation's Petition for Declaratory Order to Designate Important Agriculture Lands for Approximately 1,084.079 Acres at Naiwa, Manowainui, Kahanui, Moloka'i

Dear Chair Wong and Commissioners:

The Molokai Farm Bureau on behalf of our commercial farm and ranch families and organizations on the island, strongly support the approval of DR17-60 designating lands on Molokai as Important Agricultural Lands.

As part of the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation we supported the Federation's initiative that resulted in the Constitutional Amendment to identify and protect Important Agricultural Lands in Hawaii. We continue to support legislative initiatives that set incentives for both the land owners, and their *tenants* regarding IAL lands. As the State sets agricultural policy as a top priority, we see IAL designations as an extremely important tool in conserving our lands to strengthen our agricultural capacity.

We believe the request before the Land Use Commission has considerable merit. It places into IAL designation, land that currently supports *viable and productive* agriculture; seed industry Monsanto, COHI's coffee farm, and Tom DeCourcy's sunn hemp farm all currently produce from this parcel. This parcel in the past also produced Kumu Farms organic herbs and papaya. And as one of the few places in the world that has not yet been affected by the damages of the coffee borer beetle or papaya ring spot virus, there is genuine reason to consider the importance of preserving and protecting ag land as an agricultural resource on Molokai, for all farmers statewide.

What also should be pointed out is the cost to the State is minimal, as Monsanto has offered to waive many of the primary incentives currently in place for IAL lands.

This is a clean and simple request. The land is prime agricultural land. All agricultural operations on this parcel align with the *intent* of the IAL in protecting *existing* agricultural operations, as well as align with the Molokai Community Plan and the community's desire to cultivate future farmers. The protection of lands remaining in agriculture is not just important, it is supported by the community, vital for Molokai's economy, and because of the absence of current pests and viruses devastating agriculture in Hawaii, for all farmers statewide.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide our position on this important matter.

Mahalo,

Kirby Kester, Vice President
Molokai Farm Bureau