ALAN M. ARAKAWA
Mayor

WILLIAM R. SPENCE
Director

MICHELE CHOUTEAU McLEAN
Deputy Director

COUNTY OF MAUI
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

October 9, 2017

Mr. Daniel Orodenker
Executive Officer
Land Use Commission
235 S. Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Mr. Orodenker:

SUBJECT: COMMENTS REGARDING DOCKET NO. DR-17-60 PETITION FOR DECLARATORY ORDER TO DESIGNATE IMPORTANT AGRICULTURAL LANDS – MONSANTO COMPANY, APPROXMATELY 1,084.079 ACRES AT TAX MAP KEY (TMK) (2) 5-2-012-004 ON MOLOKAI, HAWAII; (RFC 2017/0099)

The Department of Planning (Department) is in receipt of your request for comments dated October 2, 2017. We have reviewed the Petition for Declaratory Order to Designate Important Agricultural Lands by Monsanto Company and offer the following comments:

1.   The Department does not oppose the Petition.

2.   The Department is grateful for the efforts shown by the Petitioners to preserve agricultural land through its proposed designation of a substantial portion of its property as Important Agricultural Lands. The Department particularly recognizes and appreciates the component of the Petition which "voluntarily waives any and all rights to assert, claim or exercise any credits pursuant to HRS Section 205-45(h)."

3.   In addition to those policies noted by the petitioner, the 2001 Moloka'i Community Plan contains several other Goals, Policies and Objectives that promote and support agriculture, including:

Land Use:

Promote and support the use of land in the State Agricultural District for productive agricultural purposes through implementing beneficial policies and education;

Protect prime, productive and potentially productive agricultural lands from competing non-agricultural land uses.

Economic Activity:

Maintain agriculture as an important economic activity on the island.

4.   The Draft Moloka'i Community Plan, which is under review and pending adoption by the Maui County Council, also contains Goals, Policies and Objectives that promote and support agriculture, including:
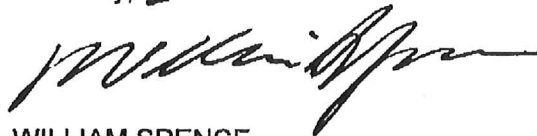
Land Use and Housing:

Promote ecological diversity, natural resources, culturally sensitive lands, and agricultural lands...

Molokai's land use pattern will protect agricultural lands, open space, and natural and cultural resources, and support livable small towns and rural communities.

5.   In addition to the language identified by the Petitioner, the 2010 Countywide Policy Plan contains significant language dedicated to agriculture in Section II: Maui County Today. The plan calls to attention many beneficial facets of agriculture including self-sufficiency in food and energy production, economic security through diversity and employment, and improving the quality of life for residents and visitors by the vast open spaces and beautiful countryside that are the result of agricultural land.

6.   While the Department supports the Petition, we do wish, however, to have the record reflect that there are other lands on Molokai and Maui under the Petitioner's control which they have chosen to not include within their Petition, but which the majority are still prime, and all are productive agricultural lands. Most of these lands are presently designated for agricultural use under Maui County's community plans and all are zoned agriculture under the County's zoning authority. The County may continue to give these parcels agricultural designations under subsequent community plans (updates) and continue to protect them as agricultural lands under the County's zoning authority.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments. If you require further clarification, please contact Administrative Planning Officer Kathleen Ross Aoki by email at kathleen.aoki@mauicounty.gov or at (808) 270-7734.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM SPENCE
Planning Director

xc: Kathleen Ross. Aoki, Administrative Planning Officer
Clayton I. Yoshida, AICP, Planning Program Administrator
Michael Hopper, Deputy Corporation Counsel
RFC File
General File
WRS:KRA:rhl
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