



Hawaii Agriculture Research Center

Administration: P.O. Box 100, Kunia, HI 96759

Ph: 808-621-1350/Fax: 808-621-1359

www.harc-hspa.com

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON HEALTH and ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

HCR 129/HR 100

REQUESTING THE DIRECTOR OF HEALTH TO ESTABLISH A TASK FORCE TO STUDY THE EFFECTS OF ATRAZINE ON HUMAN HEALTH

Thursday, March 28, 2013, 10:00am

Aloha Chairs Belatti and Lee, Vice Chairs Morikawa and Thielen, and Members of the Committees.

My name is Stephanie Whalen. I am Executive Director of the Hawaii Agriculture Research Center (HARC). I am testifying today on behalf of the center and our research and support staff.

The Hawaii Agriculture Research Center respectfully **opposes** these resolutions because they contain allegations that are simply not accurate.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is the appropriate agency to review pesticide safety and health issues and has the requisite scientific expertise and resources to conduct a review of the herbicide atrazine. It is our understanding that EPA will be conducting another review of the compound later this year.

The amount of atrazine (and each and every pesticide) applied to any crop is determined by EPA after required and rigorous human health and environmental studies which are audited, reviewed, and evaluated by EPA. This requires years of studies and subsequent evaluations before the agency permits the use of a pesticide. Use is then controlled by EPA and State regulatory agencies. EPA continues to review new information on each pesticide at regular intervals, and as needed.

The EPA has reviewed and dismissed some atrazine research studies for not meeting its rigorous scientific standards. The agency continues to review all data from ongoing studies. Scientists from around the world continue to study atrazine. There are more scientific studies on atrazine than any other pesticide; regulatory decisions are based on the collective analysis of all the data from these studies.

Recently in Hawaii, after several private individuals gave rousing presentations to the community that were **not** authorized, sponsored, or backed by EPA or any State agency, much interest and speculation was generated regarding atrazine and frogs.

The decline of frogs has been a continuing mystery for decades and many potential causes have been suggested, including habitat change, introduced predators, pollution, pesticides, and over-harvesting by collectors. Yet frogs also vanished from pristine habitats such as those in Panama and elsewhere. Recent studies show that, in what may be the greatest disease-driven loss of biodiversity in recorded history, hundreds of frog species around the world are facing extinction, not from atrazine, but from a virulent fungus, *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*, that clogs the frogs' pores, triggering a lethal heart attack.

For over 15 years I have been personally involved from the agricultural user's perspective, in the EPA's re-evaluation of atrazine. Representing farmers who could have the most exposure and potential health effects, and having some academic experience in toxicology, I requested the industry to monitor its wells and groundwater for atrazine beneath its operations in the 1980s, focusing on drinking water sources. They agreed, and this data was made available to Hawaii's public agencies. The industry voluntarily restricted its usage in an area on the Big Island which seemed to be more vulnerable, even though the concentrations found there were far below the advisory level at that time, and below the proposed number for a safe drinking water maximum contaminant level. The levels are still well below any regulatory health level.

Drinking water purveyors are required to, and do regularly test for many compounds in water, including atrazine. A report is generated annually to consumers by their drinking water purveyor that details any contaminants and their concentrations. When detected, atrazine is not being found in Hawaii's drinking water at levels anywhere near health-based EPA limits.

Hawaii's agriculture faces significant and year-round challenges from weeds. Atrazine is an effective herbicide that can be used safely to control weeds that can out-compete crops. Further studies of potential human health effects related to the product should be performed or evaluated by EPA, the agency with the expertise and resources.

Thank you for the opportunity to present comments in opposition to these measures.

State of Hawaii House Resolution 100 / HRC 129 Testimony

Syngenta Hawaii supports efforts to educate and inform the public about atrazine and other herbicides. The public should understand their importance to sustainable agriculture in our state and, to reduce unwarranted concern, should be informed about the exceptional level of regulation that governs their use.

However, we cannot support HR 100/HCR129 in its current form. As written, this resolution contains numerous factual errors that misrepresents atrazine's solid safety record and inappropriately creates anxiety among the public about an essential tool that Hawaii farmers and others depend on. Farmers rely on atrazine for a variety of reasons: to keep their fields productive, to conserve water and to enable them to use no-till farming techniques, which preserve topsoil, improve water quality and reduce the carbon footprint of agriculture.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has re-registered atrazine twice over the past 50 years, most recently in 2006. The agency typically reviews 160 to 180 scientific studies before registering a product. But in the case of atrazine, EPA reviewed nearly 7,000 studies. Based on thorough and transparent reviews of atrazine's overwhelmingly detailed database, EPA concluded that atrazine can be safely used. Furthermore, the agency is set to begin the next scheduled registration review of atrazine this year. No state-level task force could meet the scale of effort put forth by EPA to comprehend the vast amount of technical detail that supports atrazine's registration. For that reason, states have relied on EPA's comprehensive and publically available reviews and regulatory judgments, rather than expend considerable resources to duplicate its efforts.

In addition to EPA, the World Health Organization (WHO) and government regulators in the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia have found atrazine to be safe at levels found in the environment. In fact, after a thorough review of all the available scientific evidence, WHO in 2010 raised its recommended acceptable atrazine levels in drinking water by 50-fold — from 2 parts per billion (ppb) to 100 ppb — more than 33 times higher than the EPA standard of 3 ppb.

Beyond its crucial role in American agriculture, atrazine is used in more than 60 countries across Asia, Africa, North America, South America and the Middle East. Though not used in Europe, atrazine received favorable safety reviews from regulators, and a sister herbicide is widely used by many European farmers.

Atrazine effectively manages weeds, enabling farmers to grow more food on less land, using less water, less labor, less energy and releasing less carbon into the atmosphere. And that benefits everyone. Here in Hawaii, seed farmers use atrazine as an integral part of cultivating enough seeds to feed an expanding global population, expected to reach 9 billion people by 2050.

If this proposed task force does indeed move forward, we would respectfully suggest including scientists and agriculture representatives who are familiar with the field of crop protection,

EPA's registration process and its Scientific Advisory Panels, and the studies the agency and other regulators have relied upon in making their decisions regarding atrazine's safety.

Atrazine plays a critical role, both here in Hawaii and around the world, in the ongoing effort to feed a burgeoning global population while protecting people, wildlife and the environment.

There is simply no substitute for atrazine. It is an off-patent, affordable and very well understood product.

Thank you.

Mark Phillipson
Syngenta Hawaii

morikawa2 - Shaun

From: thielen3 - Charles on behalf of EEPtestimony
Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2013 1:43 PM
To: HLTtestimony
Subject: FW: *Submitted testimony for HR100 on Mar 28, 2013 10:00AM*

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov [mailto:mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, March 26, 2013 9:35 PM
To: EEPtestimony
Cc: hokuokekai50@msn.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HR100 on Mar 28, 2013 10:00AM*

HR100

Submitted on: 3/26/2013

Testimony for EEP/HLT on Mar 28, 2013 10:00AM in Conference Room 325

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Mary Lacques	Hawai'i SEED	Support	No

Comments:

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morikawa2 - Shaun

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Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2013 11:35 AM
To: EEPtestimony
Cc: agardnerrn@msn.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HCR129 on Mar 28, 2013 10:00AM

HCR129

Submitted on: 3/27/2013

Testimony for EEP/HLT on Mar 28, 2013 10:00AM in Conference Room 325

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Amanda Hutchinson	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Dear Hawaii Legislatures, I understand that Atrazine is being sprayed in HAWAII and that It has been found in the water supply. Our family vacations in Hawaii on an annual basis. It angers me that a group of islands so beautiful and so special are being quietly undermined with poisonous chemicals and GMO crops. At the very least, please support a task force to assess the damage from Atrazine if not stopping its use immediately. Please do your part to keep at least one place on Earth pure and safe. It is your responsibility. Amanda Hutchinson, RN, BSN, CCRN Alumni St. George, Utah

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Sent: Tuesday, March 26, 2013 12:28 AM
To: EEPtestimony
Cc: Suiteness@gmail.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HR100 on Mar 28, 2013 10:00AM*

HR100

Submitted on: 3/26/2013

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Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Annie Suite	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov [mailto:mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, March 26, 2013 9:40 AM
To: EEPtestimony
Cc: lotuslover@hotmail.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HR100 on Mar 28, 2013 10:00AM*

HR100

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Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
courtney Bruch	GMO Free Maui	Support	No

Comments:

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov [mailto:mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, March 26, 2013 9:14 AM
To: EEPtestimony
Cc: christidemuth@yahoo.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HR100 on Mar 28, 2013 10:00AM

HR100

Submitted on: 3/26/2013

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Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
CHRISTI DEMUTH	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Just yesterday a article in a national paper told the mainland and us folks here that Hawaii testing for Atrazine is severely lacking. As elected officials who represent "we the people" it is imperative that you test the waters of the state. I urge you to pass this measure.

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov [mailto:mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2013 12:54 PM
To: EEPtestimony
Cc: haha@hawaii.rr.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HR100 on Mar 28, 2013 10:00AM

HR100

Submitted on: 3/27/2013

Testimony for EEP/HLT on Mar 28, 2013 10:00AM in Conference Room 325

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
C. Kong	Individual	Support	No

Comments: HEALTH, LIFE and the welfare of your constituents should be top priority. Please support this hearing for the people of Hawai'i. Mahalo.

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Subject: FW: *Submitted testimony for HR100 on Mar 28, 2013 10:00AM*

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov [mailto:mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov]
Sent: Monday, March 25, 2013 11:09 PM
To: EEPtestimony
Cc: claudiarice25@gmail.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HR100 on Mar 28, 2013 10:00AM*

HR100

Submitted on: 3/25/2013

Testimony for EEP/HLT on Mar 28, 2013 10:00AM in Conference Room 325

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
claudia rice	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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Subject: FW: Submitted testimony for HCR129 on Mar 28, 2013 10:00AM

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov [mailto:mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, March 26, 2013 8:37 AM
To: EEPtestimony
Cc: inunyabus@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HCR129 on Mar 28, 2013 10:00AM

HCR129

Submitted on: 3/26/2013

Testimony for EEP/HLT on Mar 28, 2013 10:00AM in Conference Room 325

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Elaine D.	Individual	Support	No

Comments: This is a smart resolution. Is there any valid reason NOT to study the effects of atrazine on humans?

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov [mailto:mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, March 26, 2013 7:58 AM
To: EEPtestimony
Cc: naldajw@gmail.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HR100 on Mar 28, 2013 10:00AM*

HR100

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Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
JW Nalda	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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From: thielen3 - Charles on behalf of EEPtestimony
Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2013 1:42 PM
To: HLTtestimony
Subject: FW: *Submitted testimony for HCR129 on Mar 28, 2013 10:00AM*

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov [mailto:mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, March 26, 2013 2:04 PM
To: EEPtestimony
Cc: katiehorgan@me.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HCR129 on Mar 28, 2013 10:00AM*

HCR129

Submitted on: 3/26/2013

Testimony for EEP/HLT on Mar 28, 2013 10:00AM in Conference Room 325

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kathleen Horgan	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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To: HLTtestimony
Subject: FW: Submitted testimony for HCR129 on Mar 28, 2013 10:00AM

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov [mailto:mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, March 26, 2013 4:05 PM
To: EEPtestimony
Cc: kshishido02@yahoo.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HCR129 on Mar 28, 2013 10:00AM

HCR129

Submitted on: 3/26/2013

Testimony for EEP/HLT on Mar 28, 2013 10:00AM in Conference Room 325

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
K. Shishido	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I strongly support this resolution.

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov [mailto:mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2013 12:15 PM
To: EEPtestimony
Cc: caveguy@hawaiiantel.net
Subject: Submitted testimony for HR100 on Mar 28, 2013 10:00AM

HR100

Submitted on: 3/27/2013

Testimony for EEP/HLT on Mar 28, 2013 10:00AM in Conference Room 325

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Lars Lind	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I urge you to request the director of health to establish a task force to study the effects of Atrazine on human health. Other studies throughout the US and Europe have shown that Atrazine is very harmful to animals and probably humans, and its use as a pesticide is poisoning our watersheds and drinking water. We must take the first step to stop the use of this very dangerous pesticide! Mahalo.

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov [mailto:mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov]
Sent: Monday, March 25, 2013 11:38 PM
To: EEPtestimony
Cc: foodsovereignty@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HR100 on Mar 28, 2013 10:00AM

HR100

Submitted on: 3/25/2013

Testimony for EEP/HLT on Mar 28, 2013 10:00AM in Conference Room 325

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Mitsuko Hayakawa	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Thank you for addressing this issue. Atrazine has been linked to endocrine disruption, increased risk of miscarriage, reduced male fertility, low birth weight, increased chance of birth defects, and higher incidence of abdominal defects. Evidence is rising that this pesticide may be linked to elevated risk of breast and prostate cancer. Many other countries such as Atrazine producer Syngenta's own country of Switzerland has a ban on Atrazine. Dr. Tyrone Hayes, former researcher for Syngenta warns of this chemical's effects crossing multiple generations after exposure. As a concerned mother, I would want a ban on this chemical and at the minimum would like the State to study its effects on our health and environment more carefully. Mahalo.

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov [mailto:mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2013 12:11 PM
To: EEPtestimony
Cc: mauimmartha@hawaiiantel.net
Subject: Submitted testimony for HR100 on Mar 28, 2013 10:00AM

HR100

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Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Martha Lind	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Atrazine is widely used in the U.S. as a pesticide, and it is poisoning our watersheds and drinking water! It has been banned in the European Union, and it should be banned here too. I support the establishment of a task force to study the effects of Atrazine on human health as a first step in getting Atrazine banned in Hawaii and the U.S. Mahalo.

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Sent: Monday, March 25, 2013 11:03 PM
To: EEPtestimony
Cc: mzerbe808@gmail.com
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Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Margaret Zerbe	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2013 8:52 AM
To: EEPtestimony
Cc: pattio57@mac.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HR100 on Mar 28, 2013 10:00AM*

HR100

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Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Patricia Osborne	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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Cc: shannonkona@gmail.com
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Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Shannon Rudolph	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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Sent: Tuesday, March 26, 2013 10:00 PM
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Cc: sarahkauai@yahoo.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HCR129 on Mar 28, 2013 10:00AM

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Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
sarah smith	Individual	Comments Only	No

Comments: DIRECTOR OF HEALTH: ESTABLISH A TASK FORCE TO STUDY THE EFFECTS OF ATRAZINE ON HUMAN HEALTH.

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Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
William Rice	Individual	Support	No

Comments: PLEASE SUPPORT HCR129 FOR ATRAZINE TASK FORCE TO STUDY HUMAN HEALTH EFECTS. Atrazine exposed frogs been shown to develop multiple legs. Atrazine also chemically castrates frogs, and what do you think it does to our men? A male worker spraying atrazine in a full time job has 27,000 times the level of atrazine IN HIS URINE than the amount it takes for lab technicians to chemically castrate a frog for lab work. Atrazine is being sprayed HERE IN HAWAII. It has gotten into our water supply, we need a task force to assess the damage and take action.

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morikawa2 - Shaun

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Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2013 1:53 PM
To: HLTtestimony
Subject: FW: Submitted testimony for HCR129 on Mar 28, 2013 10:00AM

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov [mailto:mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2013 1:53 PM
To: EEPtestimony
Cc: athurston@irmt.org
Subject: Submitted testimony for HCR129 on Mar 28, 2013 10:00AM

HCR129

Submitted on: 3/27/2013

Testimony for EEP/HLT on Mar 28, 2013 10:00AM in Conference Room 325

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Anne Thurston	Individual	Support	No

Comments: We need to move on with this study quickly.

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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