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February 21, 2016

For Immediate Release

Joint Fact-Finding Study Group Issues New Schedule for Draft Report on Pesticide Use by Major Agribusinesses on Kauai

The eight-member citizen fact-finding group on pesticide use by Kauai's major agricultural operators will release its Draft Final Report on March 10, 2016. The public comment period will close on April 8th. A public presentation and informational briefing on the report will be held by the Study Group from 7pm to 9pm on Monday April 4, 2016 at the Kauai Veterans Center, 3215 Kapule Hwy, Lihue, HI 96766.

When issued, the report will be posted on the project website at www.accord3.com/pg1000.cfm and public comments can be sent to jffcomments@gmail.com up until midnight on April 8, 2016.

The Study Group is particularly interested in two kinds of feedback. First, are there specific errors with any of the factual data or empirical evidence that has been gathered? Second, are there specific and relevant factual data or peer reviewed empirical evidence the group has missed? If so, please explain why such information and data is pertinent to pesticide use on Kauai and provide a link or reference to the information or data for the group to consider. Comments should be limited to 250 words or less.

The independent JFF Study Group, funded by the Hawaii State Department of Agriculture and the Office of the Mayor of Kauai, was facilitated by members of The *ACCORD3.0* Network and began meeting in March 2015 in the wake of the Bill 2491 and Ordinance 960 hearings. The Study Group of 8 Kauai citizens examined available data from Kauai, reviewed numerous national and international studies and spoke with a wide range of public officials, scientists, agricultural professionals, activists, and others with various roles, responsibilities, and perspectives on the use of pesticides by major agribusinesses on Kauai.

The eight members of the JFF Study Group are Adam Asquith, PhD; Lee Evslin, MD; Gerardo Rojas Garcia, MS; Sarah Styan, PhD; Kathleen West-Hurd, PhD; Douglas Wilmore, MD; Kawika Winter, PhD; and Louisa Wooten.

The independent body sought factual answers to the following question:

1. Quantitatively, what are the actual agricultural “footprints” that Kauai’s seed companies occupy and farm?
2. What pesticides do they use, in what quantities, and at what rates?
3. Are there detectable and measurable human or environmental health impacts on Kauai associated with seed company pesticide practices?
4. Is current oversight and regulation sufficient and effective?

The Draft Final Report will include the group’s tentative findings and conclusions and will include a number of recommendations based on the 12-months of fact-finding.

Joint Fact Finding, or “JFF”, is a process used to deliberate complex public policy issues by gathering, assessing, and interpreting relevant facts about specific problems. It does so by convening a group of volunteers who have science backgrounds and are willing to analyze and debate facts in a manner that is civil and leads to collective findings and conclusions. It is designed to help government and the public move closer towards resolution of divisive issues.

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