

# Global Chemical Companies Strive to Stomp Out Local Initiatives that Protect Against Pesticides and GMOs: From Kaua‘i to Capitol Hill, Citizen Actions Fight Back

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**Outlet Names:** *Cascadia Times*; *Earth Island Journal*; *The Progressive*, *Progressive.org*, and *PRWatch.org* (Center for Media and Democracy); International Media Project’s Making Contact; *Grist*; *Orion*; *Yes!*; *Truthout*; and Public News Service

## Project Description

The proposed media impact project is an investigation of how the transnational corporations that both manufacture pesticides and develop genetically engineered crops (GMOs, 85 percent of which are engineered to withstand more of a particular pesticide) are impacting public health, the environment, and democracy -- through heavy lobbying pressure at the state and federal level as well as hard-nosed litigation at the local level. The [“Big 6” pesticide and GMO corporations](#) are BASF, Bayer, Dupont, Dow Chemical Company, Monsanto, and Syngenta. These six companies largely own the world’s seed, pesticide, and biotechnology industries.

On a local level -- such as on Kaua‘i, Hawai‘i and in Oregon -- these corporations intimidate the public, politicians, and scientists, both through the influence of money in politics and through litigation. At the state level, the corporations -- with the help of lobbying and influence groups -- implement a strategy to preempt and override the local control of citizens in towns, cities, and counties that struggle to keep pesticides out of their environment and GMOs out of their food supply. At the national level, where the [“revolving door”](#) between corporate lobbyists and government staff is in full effect, the corporations influence policy at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) while also pushing policy changes at the Congressional level.

Reporting will focus on the effects of several corporations’ aggressive experimental GMO growth and heavy and mixed pesticide use for Kaua‘i, Hawai‘i, including its near-shore marine environment, as well as the corporations’ lawsuit against Kaua‘i for its ordinance limiting GMOs and pesticides, and corporate efforts at the state level to preempt Kaua‘i’s local control over its environment, as well as on related struggles on Hawai‘i’s other islands. Kaua‘i is a particularly vulnerable environment, with 48 newly designated endangered species. In mid-June, some of its offshore corals will likely also be designated as threatened or endangered.

Related reporting will focus on the state-level preemption of Oregon county-level attempts to put a moratorium on GMO crops and how groups like the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) helped push for such an override. Jackson County, which was exempted from the preemption bill through the influence of its state legislator, will vote on a ballot initiative to ban GMO growth within its borders on May 20, 2014. The “Big Six” pesticide and GMO companies recently donated a combined [\\$455,000](#) to defeat this initiative, according to *The Oregonian*.

Reports will also update audiences as to the status of struggles for local control over pesticides and GMOs nationwide.

## Outlets Featuring Unique Stories

### Earth Island Journal: May 30

- An answer to BigAg in Hawaii. Can the islands produce enough food to feed its people using alternative agricultural practices? [web feature: Maureen]

### Center for Media and Democracy (ALEC Exposed)/ The Progressive: June 4

- Web report on Kaua'i/Hawai'i -- money in politics, focusing on local and state legislation
- Web report on Oregon -- state law preempted local legislation to block GMOs (ALEC)
- Longer print story in the June issue of *The Progressive* on Oregon GMO preemption and ALEC, hitting mailboxes ~**May 19**

### Making Contact: June 4

- Radio show on Kaua'i, Hawai'i, and Oregon stories with local people's voices, as well as a brief roundup of other states' pending pesticide and GMO legislation

### Cascadia Times/ Grist/ Orion/ PNS/ Earth Island Journal/ Yes!/ Truthout: June 15

- Impact of pesticide ready seeds on animal/ land/ people health in Kauai and in Nebraska with somewhat different pieces for each editor

## Marketing Plan

NewsCred, which produces content marketing software, will help these news outlets distribute our important, interactive narrative. Each outlet in the editorial group will also participate in marketing the group's content, using the shared Twitter hashtags #BigAg and #WTFork to highlight, promote, and track the reach and impact of our stories.

## What impact do we expect to see as a result of this collaboration? What conversation will change?

We aim to tell the stories of real people about food systems and the effects of pesticide-ready GMOs on human health, the environment, and democracy in order to rebalance the conversation towards citizens and away from the pesticide and GMO industry talking points that are currently dominating the mainstream media.

## Budget

Earth Island Journal:		<u>\$300</u>
Progressive, Inc./Center for Media and Democracy:		<u>\$1,000</u>
Salaries:		
Research/Reporting, 30 hrs.:	\$600	
Promotion and Graphics, 20 hrs.:	\$400	
Making Contact:		<u>\$2,100</u>
Travel:		
Gas:	\$125	
4 nights hotel:	\$340	
Meals, etc.: \$40/day x 5 days =	\$200	
Incidentals:	\$35	
Production salaries for 3 working days:	\$530	
Promotion salaries for 40 hours:	\$870	
Cascadia Times:		<u>\$2,600</u>
Air Fare from Portland, OR to Lihue, Kaua'i:	\$600	
Car Rental for 2 wks.:	\$300	
Lodging at \$81 per night for 13 nights:	\$1,050	
Food and misc. expenses @ \$50 per day:	\$650	
<b>Total Amount Requested:</b>		<b><u>\$6,000</u></b>