



Photo: Fern Annuette Holland

Celebrating Democracy, Protecting Our Keiki

In January, PAN's Executive Director Kristin Schafer joined partners in the Protect Our Keiki coalition to celebrate opening day of the state legislature in Hawai'i. The annual event draws hundreds of people from across the islands—including busloads of students—who come to meet up with their legislators, take part in workshops, and participate in traditional cultural practices.

Our coalition's table was one of dozens distributing materials highlighting our priorities in the upcoming legislative session, and encouraging people to get involved.

Organizing for community health

The Protect Our Keiki coalition has been working together for years to protect families and children from exposure to agricultural pesticides. Use of these chemicals skyrocketed on the islands when plantation agriculture swallowed up traditional Hawaiian agriculture, and has been continued by pesticide corporations like Monsanto (now Bayer), Syngenta, and Dow (now Corteva), which control vast swaths of former plantation lands. They use these lands—and associated water rights—for testing and production of their genetically engineered (GE) seeds of corn, soy and other commodity crops, which are designed to resist application of herbicides.

In 2013, PAN supported community leaders on Kaua'i who won passage of a law requiring pesticide use disclosure and notification to protect families on the island. The pesticide corporations threw millions into the campaign to oppose Bill 2491; when they lost, they immediately took the county to court to block implementation of the new law.

The Protect Our Keiki coalition emerged from that battle to take the fight to the state capital. Active members now include the

Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action, the Hawai'i Center for Food Safety, Hawai'i SEED, Beyond Pesticides and PAN.

Onward with the good work

The coalition's work is making a difference, on the islands and beyond. In May 2018, Hawai'i became the first state in the country to ban the brain-harming pesticide chlorpyrifos. This win inspired action in other states, including decisions to withdraw use of the chemical in California and New York, and bills now moving forward in Maryland, Washington and Oregon.

Our PAN colleagues in Europe tell us that state-based actions like Hawai'i's strengthened the case for a chlorpyrifos ban in Europe, which went into effect early this year. As a result of all this, the largest manufacturer of chlorpyrifos, Corteva, recently announced it will discontinue production of the pesticide by the end of 2020.

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Our Key States Taking the Lead

The last few years of national food and farm policy have been characterized by rollbacks of common sense rules protecting public and environmental health. From blocking a ban of the brain-harming pesticide chlorpyrifos to greenlighting Monsanto's (now Bayer's) drift-prone herbicide dicamba, the current administration is constantly prioritizing corporate profits over the health of workers, farmers and families.

The current public health crisis underscores once again the importance of state leadership in building resilient systems of food and farming that are both healthy and just. Now more than ever, we are dedicated to winning smart, protective pesticide policies at the state level. The lead article highlights our Hawai'i coalition's legislative priorities that were moving forward before state legislatures across the country closed in response to the COVID-19 crisis. We present here key elements of the policy work in motion in our other key states.

Minnesota

PAN and partners hit the ground running at the start of the 2020 legislative session in Minnesota. On the very first day, the House Environment and Natural Resources Policy Committee moved two important pollinator protection bills forward. HF721 would ban neonic pesticides in Wildlife Management Areas, and has already passed easily through the full House. This is a welcome development as this same bill had strong bipartisan support last year up until the moment it mysteriously vanished behind closed doors — our Minnesota Organizer Willa Childress strongly suspects pesticide industry lobbyists were involved.

The second bill that passed through the Committee, HF1255, lifts state preemption of local control over pollinator-harming pesticides. If this bill becomes law, all Minnesota cities will have the right to restrict or ban the use of pesticides that are toxic to pollinators in their own communities. Though the legislative session is now on hold due to the novel coronavirus outbreak, we look forward to working with our partners to support both of these bills when the time comes, as they



will significantly reduce pesticide use and protect human and pollinator health in communities across the state.

Iowa

Along with our Iowa pesticide drift coalition partners, we've been tracking several legislative priorities this year including online reporting of pesticide spray drift and supporting on-farm events for small farmers.

Currently, if a farmer experiences pesticide drift, they must call the Pesticide Bureau at the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) during business hours to provide testimony over the phone (which can take over an hour!). Professors at Iowa State University estimate that 70% of drift incidents go unreported under the current system. A simple, online reporting system would make drift reporting more accessible for all farmers, ensuring IDALS has more accurate data on pesticide drift.

We're also supporting the Agriculture Experiences bill, which allows farms to host farm days, farm stands, and other on-farm events without paying for expensive permits. For CSAs and other community-based farm operations, it's important to make hosting events a normal part of farm operations. PAN is happy to be supporting the new chapter of the Iowa Young Farmers Coalition with this priority. This bill passed through both the House and Senate, and is awaiting the Governor's signature!

California

With our partners at Californians for Pesticide Reform, PAN co-sponsored a bill to strengthen the buffer zones around schools and other sensitive sites by improving notification of pesticide applications. SB1398 requires the Department of Pesticide Regulation to provide an annual update to the public of pesticide applications within the school buffer zones and any violations of the school buffers. It also requires that the "notices of intent" to apply restricted pesticides that growers submit to county agricultural commissioners would be posted online on a publicly accessible database.

We are very hopeful this bill will move forward once the current California legislative session resumes after its unprecedented closure due to the coronavirus outbreak.

We are also hopeful that the Governor's promised funding for the Work Group assessing alternatives to chlorpyrifos and other agricultural pesticides will remain in the budget despite the toll COVID-19 is taking on the state's economy. Our senior scientist Margaret Reeves is a key member of this Work Group. —

Did you know...

Legacy giving is an easy and powerful way to support PAN's work toward healthy, just food and farming systems for many years to come.

You can use the following language to leave a bequest to PAN in your will.

"I bequeath \$_____ or _____% of my estate to Pesticide Action Network North America, 2029 University Ave, Suite 200, Berkeley, CA 94704."

We also accept donations via retirement plans, life insurance policies and stock. Our tax ID # is 94-2949686.

If you'd like to discuss ways to give, please email Corrie at giving@panna.org.



Protecting Bees and Their Keepers in Minnesota

Erin Rupp is the founder and executive director of Pollinate Minnesota, a pollinator education and advocacy organization. PAN Organizer Willa Childress recently chatted with Erin about the challenges beekeepers face in our current farming system and the exciting pollinator work progressing in the state.

What's the most important thing for people to understand about pollinators and their role in agriculture?

Whether you're growing a garden at home or over a million acres of almonds in Northern California, those are all still flowers that need somebody to move pollen. Pollinators need pollen and nectar year-round in order to eat, pollinate and reproduce—something they find on diverse farms and ecosystems. But in monocultures, we have to pay beekeepers to transport millions of honey bees to do that pollination service work.

In this structure of monocultures and their rapid expansion, there was a conscious choice that went something like this: "Hey, insect pollinators are necessary, but the insecticides that



Photo: David Pierini North News

are also necessary to the way monocultures function are going to kill those insect pollinators. So we'll just pay beekeepers to bring honey bees in." I guess people thought that because honey bees live in a hive with so many individuals they weren't going to die or struggle from these chemicals the way wild pollinators do. But they are dying.

What are key barriers or challenges that beekeepers face today?

The reasons bees are struggling are well known. There are viruses and diseases specific to honey bees, and pesticide exposures and lack of food are also factors in pollinator decline. A complicating factor is that many pesticide kills happen on the farms where beekeepers are being paid to provide pollination

services, and long-standing, good relationships with growers are foundational to beekeeping. If a farmer is growing in monocultures, there are different reasons why they might use chemicals on their farm. The honey bees just take all this damage, and the system is functioning exactly how it was designed to. Those who profit are not the farmers or beekeepers, it's the agribusiness corporations who make the seed and pesticide inputs for the monoculture.



What progress on pollinator issues are you most excited about right now in Minnesota?

We're leading the nation in the number of policies we have to protect pollinators. The importance of bees and pollinators are a shared talking point for almost everyone—no one says I hate bees, or I hate beekeepers. One of the most exciting things is we're leading in the country on pesticide preemption policy. We have a local control bill moving through the House this year that would allow pollinator-friendly cities to control bees' exposure to pollinator lethal pesticides within their communities.

We also have a lot of great policy progress at levels of government smaller than the state. We have more communities that are pollinator-friendly than any other state in the country—44 plus three colleges! And just since 2014.

How can folks in Minnesota and beyond help support pollinator and beekeeper education and advocacy work?

The pollinator-friendly communities we have here in Minnesota came about because everyday constituents raised the issue with their elected officials. Patricia Hauser from a group called Humming for Bees watched a bee decline movie and brought it to her city council, asked if they would watch it with her and then discuss what they could do to help. People think they can't be experts on farm and pesticide policy, but there are ways to increase education little by little. And if you look at the pesticide industry's testimony on things like local control, they are not experts on policy at all!

Farmers around the world, for millennia, have been farming regeneratively and in a way that supports pollinators and ecosystems. We have the tools and relationships to make this happen. There is real interest and passion behind this issue, and a lot of public support. We're seeing that reflected in policy and it's exciting! —E

To read the full interview, visit www.panna.org/beekeeper.

ABOUT PAN PAN works to create a just, thriving food system, working with those on the frontlines to tackle the pesticide problem—and reclaim the future of food and farming. One of five regional centers worldwide, PAN North America links local and international consumer, labor, health, environment and agriculture groups into an international citizens' action network. Together, we challenge the global proliferation of pesticides, defend basic rights to health and environmental quality, and work to ensure the transition to a just and viable food system.

This current session, the Protect Our Keiki coalition—with the support of this year’s PAN Fellow, Lorilani Keohokalole—supported bills to strengthen pesticide-free buffer zones around schools, increase transparency and documentation regarding pesticide drift, and ensure safe disposal of highly hazardous pesticides.

The coalition also continues to build power. Protect Our Keiki is part of a growing movement across the islands for just and healthy local food production—a stated aim of the Governor. Yet the giant pesticide corporations that have set up shop on the islands continue to undermine these goals as they pollute Hawaiian waters, lands and communities.

Honoring Mauna Kea protectors

This year on opening day of the legislature, there was a powerful display of solidarity with the Mauna Kea protectors. At 8AM and noon, hundreds of people gathered in the central plaza of the statehouse to dance hula and chant (oli). This is a daily ritual on Mauna Kea, led by elders who have been blocking installation of the TMT (Thirty Meter telescope) since July of last year.

Mauna Kea is a deeply sacred mountain that includes hundreds of revered places and over 34 burial sites. TMT is proposed to be three times as wide with nine times more area



PAN Fellow Lorilani Keohokalole at opening day of the Hawai'i state legislature

covered than the largest currently existing visible-light telescope in the world.

The solidarity protests capped a deeply inspiring day celebrating Hawaiian culture and civic engagement. As Kristin noted upon her return, maybe statehouses across the country should mark the first day of each legislative session with public celebrations! 🍃

PAN supporter Amos Alan Lans is a volunteer urban gardener creating healthy pollinator habitat in his neighborhood. Here's his story.

Back in 2012, amidst gloomy reports about bee colony collapse and drastic declines in butterfly populations, I happened upon a hopeful bit of news: Oakland, California, had banned pesticide use in public parks! This means that our parks have the potential to become much-needed habitats for bees, butterflies, and other pollinators — no matter how urban the setting!



I so appreciate the work PAN does, and the expertise & passion you all bring to your advocacy.

— Amos Alan Lans

Since then, several North Oakland neighbors have helped me plant and care for a pollinator garden in Dover Street Park. I love when people visit our garden, learn how bees play crucial roles in fruit and vegetable production, and feel more motivated to protect the fragile web which is our food, soil and plant ecosystem.

Monarch, Gulf fritillary, swallowtail and painted lady butterflies — and many kinds of bees — sip nectar from our purple butterfly bushes, pink passionflower vines, red and orange milkweed and blue borage.

We'd love to involve more folks to join us in this beautiful work! We warmly welcome PAN and other community partners to our upcoming pollinator garden work parties and other events.



Photos courtesy of Amos Alan Lans.

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