ALEXANDER & BALDWIN, INC.

February 20, 2009

Office of Pesticide Programs (OPP)
Regulatory Public Docket (7502P)
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20460-0001

Subject: Docket Number EPA-HQ-OPP-2008-0877

Alexander & Baldwin, Inc. (A&B), on behalf of its division Hawaiian Commercial and Sugar Company (HC&S), submits the following comments on the *Petition to Revoke all Tolerances and Cancel All Registrations for the Pesticide 2,4-Dichlorophenoxyacetic Acid.*

A&B strongly urges EPA to deny this petition and to continue existing tolerances and registrations for this important weed control tool.

HC&S grows and processes sugarcane on the island of Maui, Hawaii and is the largest sugar producer in the state. HC&S relies upon a range of tools for the protection of its crop from insects, weeds, rodents, and other pests. Insect control for the crop is maintained exclusively through biological predators and by breeding for resistance to insects and insect-borne diseases. The judicious use of herbicides plays an integral role in the control of weeds in sugarcane fields, particularly in the early stages of crop growth.

Formulations of 2,4-Dichlorophenoxyacetic acid (2,4-D) are the chemicals of choice for post emergence broadleaf control in Hawaiian sugarcane. Many of the broadleaf weed species found in Hawaiian sugarcane fields are large seeded plants (e.g., castor bean and bean species) and/or vines (e.g., morning glory, bitter melon). Unlike smaller weeds which can be largely controlled through pre-emergence applications and which the crop can out-compete once it becomes established, castor beans and vines continue to grow in the fields throughout the crop cycle. Without adequate control, these species can grow over the cane plant, severely retarding crop growth. Under conditions of extreme weed growth, the cane plant can be killed. **At present there are no post emergence alternatives to 2,4-D for sugarcane.**

Control of vines and castor beans in sugarcane fields using all tools currently available is already a major challenge. In the event that formulations of 2,4-D were no longer available for use on sugarcane, the impact on the sugar industry would be devastating. Initially, delayed planting with extensive cultivation to rid fields of existing weed populations would be necessary; this would both increase the cost of crop production and reduce yields by reducing the age of the crop before harvest. Under drought conditions (such as currently exist, and have existed for several years, on Maui), this practice would not effectively control weeds due to reduced germination. Even when the practice is effective, however, seeds would eventually be re-introduced into the fields by birds or other means. Once the cane reaches a size where mechanical cultivation is no longer

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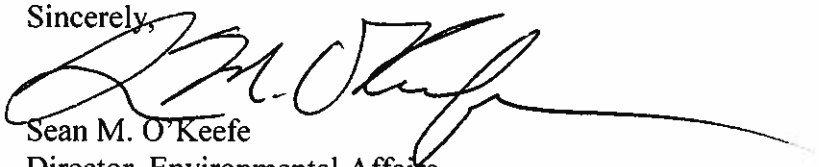
possible, vines or castor beans can take over a field, leading to total crop loss in the area of infestation. The resulting seed loading would further exacerbate weed control difficulties for the subsequent crop.

EPA in 2005 completed and published the 2,4-D Re-registration Eligibility Decision (RED) following a 17-year review process during which literally hundreds of toxicology, ecotoxicity, residue, non-target plant and environmental fate studies were conducted and submitted by the Industry Task Force on 2,4-D Research Data; these and hundreds more studies and published papers were reviewed and considered by EPA. On this basis, EPA concluded that 2,4-D does not pose an unreasonable risk to man and the environment. Moreover, EPA concluded in 2007, after more than 21 years of research and agency review, that no correlation exists between 2,4-D exposure and human cancer. In 2008, Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency published its own RED finding that 2,4-D meets all of Canada's strict pesticide safety regulations. These RED's are consistent with previous decisions made by the World Health Organization and the European Commission regarding 2,4-D.

2,4-D is versatile, economical, and a key herbicide in weed resistance management, making it among the most widely used herbicides in North America and worldwide. The Hawaii sugar industry, and other crop producers across the country, can ill afford to lose this important crop protection tool. It has been estimated that the loss of 2,4-D would cost the U.S. economy $1.7 billion annually in higher food production and/or alternate weed control expenses (USDA National Agricultural Pesticide Impact Assessment Program Special Report 1-PA-96); the impact on the Hawaii sugarcane industry could be considerably more devastating. Given the comprehensive review forming the basis of the RED and its consistency with findings by other governmental bodies, it is clear that EPA's RED is well supported and scientifically sound, and that further challenges to the use of 2,4-D on the basis of alleged human health or environmental impacts is unwarranted. We therefore strongly urge that EPA deny the petition to revoke all tolerances and cancel all registrations for 2,4-D.

Thank you for considering our comments on this important matter.

Sincerely,



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