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GOVERNOR OF HAWAI'I

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DIRECTOR OF HEALTH

STATE OF HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
P.O. Box 3378
HONOLULU, HAWAI'I 96801-3378

In reply, please refer to:
File: EHA / HEER Office
2015-532-ES

September 15, 2015

Dr. Walter Chun

Personal Matters / Ex. 6

Facility/Sites: Military Family Housing Neighborhoods at Marine Corps Base Hawai'i

Subject: HDOH response to your 8/20/2015 letter, "Health Issues for Military Families at Kaneohe Marine Base"

Dear Dr. Chun:

Dr. Virginia Pressler asked that the Hawai'i Department of Health (HDOH) Office of Hazard Evaluation and Emergency Response (HEER) respond directly to your 8/20/2015 complaint regarding military family housing neighborhoods at Marine Corps Base Hawai'i (MCBH). In your complaints to us over the last six years, you have repeatedly expressed your beliefs that: (1) pesticide-impacted soils (PI soils) were improperly managed during construction of MCBH neighborhoods; (2) residents in these neighborhoods were consequently exposed to high levels of residual pesticides; and (3) this exposure has harmed residents' health.

As we have stated in our previous responses, HDOH has no environmental soil sampling data showing the presence of high pesticide levels in surface soils in these neighborhoods. Without such evidence, it is not possible to link health effects to environmental exposure.

HDOH is concerned about the health of the community. While the Department does not treat or diagnose patients, we can provide technical information on pesticide poisonings. Community members concerned about pesticide or other environmental chemical exposures may contact Dr. Barbara Brooks, our state toxicologist, at *barbara.brooks@doh.hawaii.gov*. If permission is provided, Dr. Brooks is available to discuss patients' concerns about possible pesticide exposure with their physicians or other health care providers. We work closely with medical toxicologists from the Hawai'i Poison Center (HPC) and consult with them on acute exposures, so the HPC may also be a good resource for community members concerned about environmental exposures.

HDOH has no environmental epidemiologists on staff to conduct a health or epidemiological study of the community. However, we will share your letter and its accompanying information with the U.S. Agency for Toxic and Substances Disease Registry (ATSDR), a federal agency focused on preventing harmful exposures and diseases related to toxic substances.

To recap the HDOH role to date, HEER concurred with the *Pesticide Soils Management Plan (Plan)* prepared by Ohana Military Communities (OMC) in 2007 because we determined that effective implementation of this *Plan* was an appropriate approach for protecting human health and the environment from risks posed by PI soils. Thereafter, neither OMC, the Marine Corps, nor the Navy sought any further HDOH regulatory oversight or approval for the ongoing PI soil management activities at MCBH. In 2014, in response to our Request for Information dated 3/21/2014, OMC provided HDOH detailed information on pre-construction soil sampling and on implementation of the *Plan*. OMC had also previously provided HDOH documentation of post-construction soil sampling in Pa Honua III, an MCBH neighborhood not built by OMC, showing no elevated pesticide levels in surface soils. However, OMC did not conduct post-construction soil sampling after completion of their own building projects to confirm that the PI soil management activities specified in their *Plan* had been effectively implemented. In the absence of such sampling data, the actual condition of surface soils in most MCBH housing areas is unknown, and HDOH can therefore neither confirm nor dismiss your concerns.

Should you have further questions about pesticide-impacted soils issues at Hawai'i military family housing neighborhoods, please contact Mr. Eric Sadoyama of HDOH's HEER Office at *eric.sadoyama@doh.hawaii.gov* or (808) 586-0955.

Sincerely,

HAROLD LAO, Acting Program Manager
Hazard Evaluation and Emergency Response Office

c: Mr. Randall Hu, Marine Corps Base Hawai'i, Kāne'ohe
Mr. Bradford Davis, Naval Facilities Engineering Command Pacific, JBPHH
Mr. Gregory Raap, Ohana Military Communities, Honolulu
Ms. Angeles Herrera, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 9, San Francisco
Capt. Robert Knowles, U.S. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, Region 9, San Francisco

ADDRESSEES

Walter Chun, Ph.D.

Personal Matters / Ex. 6

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