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PUBLIC STATEMENT ON DEPLETED URANIUM

Depleted uranium (DU) was found recently in the Wahiawa area, contrary to the Army's repeated denial of its use in Hawai'i. Depleted uranium (DU) is made from nuclear waste and is a radioactive and highly toxic substance. There are growing concerns about the health hazards of DU, including the mounting evidence that DU is one of the factors contributing to Gulf War Syndrome.

An email between Army officials dated September 19, 2005 pertaining to unexploded ordnance removal for the Stryker Brigade expansion [enclosed] states "we have found much that we did not expect, including recent find of depleted uranium." Up to this point, the military has denied any use of depleted uranium in Hawaii. The email goes on to describe the site as a CWM (Chemical Warfare Materiel) site where "the danger is just too high" to use mechanical sifters. These recent revelations, then, indicate that the Army is either unaware of its DU and chemical weapons use, or has intentionally misled the public. Both possibilities are deeply troubling.

The military has maintained a pattern of secret testing of dangerous materials on Hawaii's land and people for decades, including sarin nerve gas testing in the 1960s, dumping of 8,000 tons of chemical weapons offshore of Waianae, and Agent Orange tests on Kauai. This is the latest in a history of lethal secrecy. We are concerned about what other dangerous activities are affecting our families, which will only be disclosed to us in decades to come. Secret military testing, exercises, and research are unacceptable. We will not allow our ohana and aina to be used as test subjects in a futile quest for global hegemony. Rather than expose our families to the inevitable risk that comes with mixing dangerous toxins with our fragile, intertwined environment, it is far wiser and prudent that we adopt the principle of precaution, and remove and prevent those things which may, in all likelihood, be harmful.

This revelation on DU use in our homeland comes in the midst of a proposal to increase secret military activities through a research facility at the University of Hawaii, a planned land grab for a Stryker brigade, and renewed live-fire training at Makua. Military expansion must cease, to protect our communities from new dangers, and existing areas should be immediately cleaned and returned. We are demanding full disclosure by the Army about its training and munitions recovery activities in Hawai'i, the immediate clean up of contaminated areas, and health care for potentially affected communities, including military personnel and their families. We are filing a Freedom of Information Act request today for additional information about DU in the Hawaiian islands. The life of the land and the people must be upheld. Ua mau ke ea o ka aina i ka pono.