



February 10, 2015

TESTIMONY: Written Only

To: Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Health

From: Hawaii Public Health Association

Subject: **SUPPORT** for HB940 Relating to the Regulation of Tobacco Products

Dear Chair Au Belatti and Members of the Committee,

The Hawaii Public Health Association (HPHA) is an association of over 600 community members, public health professionals, and organizations statewide dedicated to improving public health. HPHA also serves as a voice for public professionals and as a repository for information about public health in the Pacific.

HPHA **strongly supports** the passage of HB940 which would prohibit the use of electronic smoking devices (ESDs) wherever smoking is prohibited by law.

As indicated in recent local media, youth fascination with ESDs warrant proactive measures to uphold social norms and curb usage before it is too late. According to the Hawaii Youth Tobacco Survey, lifetime e-cigarette use among high school students tripled from 5.1 percent in 2011 to 17.6 percent in 2013. Use also quadrupled among middle school students, from 1.8 percent to 7.9 percent, during the same time period. The rate of uptake for these products is alarming and the passage of measures to decrease social acceptability of ESDs is urgently needed.

According to the CDC, nicotine use by youths in any form is unsafe and can harm adolescent brain development. Additionally, the fact that ESDs are found to contain and emit toxic and carcinogenic chemicals, yet remain unregulated in terms of use, manufacturing, and marketing, leaves the public highly vulnerable to its potentially devastating impact.

Holding ESD use to the same regulatory standards as cigarettes is an important means of proactively protecting the public against emerging tobacco products. Regulation, as through HB0940, updates definitions to fully address the diversity of evolving products, simplifies enforcement of all smoking, and decreases the social acceptability of tobacco use. The HPHA supports this strong policy to protect the health of people in Hawaii as well as future generations.

Respectfully submitted,

Holly Kessler, Executive Director
Hawaii Public Health Association