



January 31, 2024

To: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & HOMELESSNESS
Rep. Della Au Belatti, Chair
Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

Re: SUPPORT of HB1778 - Relating to Tobacco Products

Hrg: Friday, February 2, 2024, 8:30am

The Hawai'i Public Health Association (HPHA) is a group of over 450 community members, public health professionals, and organizations statewide dedicated to improving public health. Our mission is to promote public health in Hawai'i through leadership, collaboration, education and advocacy. Additionally, HPHA aims to call attention to issues around social justice and equity in areas that extend beyond the traditional context of health (e.g., education, digital equity, cultural sensitivity), which can have profound impacts on health equity and well-being. Therefore, as stewards of public health, HPHA is also advocating for equity in all policies.

HPHA supports HB1778 as the bill aims to curtail the youth vaping epidemic.

In Hawai'i, 14.8% of high school students and 6.7% of middle school students still report "current use" of e-cigarettes. With 8 in 10 kids starting with a flavored tobacco product, a major way to address young people's use of tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, is to prohibit the sale of flavors that attract youth in the first place and discourage them from trying these products. This legislation will remove the thousands of fruit and candy-flavored tobacco products, as well as menthol cigarettes, that are addicting our keiki.

Thank you for allowing HPHA the opportunity to provide testimony on this important matter.

Respectfully submitted,

Holly Kessler
Executive Director