



February 12, 2023

To: David A. Tarnas, Chair
Gregg Takayama, Vice Chair
House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

Re: Testimony in Support of HB537, Relating to Electronic Smoking Devices; E-Liquids; Electronic Smoking Device Retailer Registration Unit; Wholesalers; Tax

Hrg: 14 Feb 2023, 2:00PM, House Conference room 325 via Videoconference

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.

We strongly support HB537 to establish a tax on e-cigarettes at 70% of the manufacturer's list price. This will create parity between e-cigarettes and other tobacco products.

E-cigarettes are the only tobacco products without a tax. Extensive research has demonstrated that taxing tobacco products and cigarettes reduces tobacco use and saves lives. When considering e-cigarettes, keiki are especially vulnerable as e-cigarettes are now the most popular tobacco produce among youth. In Hawai'i 1 in 3 high school students and 1 in 5 middle school students report current use of e-cigarettes or vaping. Yet, e-cigarette products are not subject to many of the regulations that other tobacco products are subject to.

This bill would create the necessary regulations on e-cigarettes in Hawaii and keep them out of the hands of our keiki.

We strongly support HB537 and respectfully ask that you pass this measure to reduce e-cigarette use among keiki. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important public health issue affecting youth in our communities.

Respectfully submitted,

Holly Kessler
Executive Director