



LATE TESTIMONY: Written only

January 29, 2015

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: HB0525 Relating to State Parks

Dear Chair Au Belatti and Members of the Committee,

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 health professionals and as a repository for information about public health in the Pacific.

The Hawaii Public Health Association (HPHA) supports the passage of HB0525 which would prohibit tobacco, e-cigarette and betel nut use within the state park system.

Measures that expand the protection of tobacco-free policies to state parks would benefit the public by increasing the availability of healthy recreational environments while also upholding the sustainability of our natural resources. Cigarette butt litter is toxic and can leach harmful chemicals into the environment posing a serious threat to our beautiful natural surroundings. Permitting smoking in areas where people work and play also reinforces unhealthy behaviors. HB0525 would build upon smoke-free and tobacco-free park and beach efforts already begun on the county levels.

As an added benefit, the impact that policies such as these have on social norms is far-reaching. Policies that prohibit use of tobacco and other harmful products help people to quit smoking and prevents youth from starting. Historically, it is reported that approximately 90% of those who quit smoking each year do so without seeking help from a health care provider, service or program. It is suggested that smoke-free policies and other factors that decrease the social acceptability of smoking could enhance the success of these so-called "unaided quit attempts".

Hawaii, Maui, and Honolulu counties already have such policies in place for outdoor recreational areas. HB0525 promotes positive social norms and increases the availability of health recreational environments. The HPHA supports this measure to prohibit tobacco, e-cigarette and betel nut use within Hawaii's state parks.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Holly Kessler".

Holly Kessler, Executive Director
Hawaii Public Health Association