



LATE TESTIMONY: Written only

February 3, 2015

To: The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
The Honorable Brian T. Taniguchi, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

From: Hawaii Public Health Association

Subject: SB1220 Relating to Chapter 245, Hawaii Revised Statutes

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

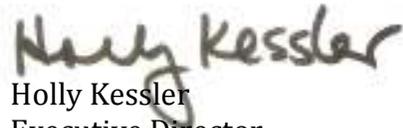
The Hawaii Public Health Association (HPHA) **supports** the passage of SB1220 which would achieve tax parity between cigarettes and other tobacco products (OTP). This bill also requires that subsequent increases in taxation of cigarettes also translate to OTP.

The HPHA affirms this measure's purpose to protect against the inequitable creation of lower-priced tobacco products should cigarette taxes increase. Parity between products protects the public from becoming disproportionately incentivized to purchase OTP. As price is often the driver of consumer behavior, achievement of tax parity would reduce the widening gap.

Smokeless tobacco use is harmful and can be deadly. It causes oral cancer, gum disease, and nicotine addiction. It also increases the risk of cardiovascular disease and heart attacks. By equalizing tax rates on all tobacco products, Hawai'i can achieve similar decreases to use, harms, and costs as is associated with similar decreases in consumption of cigarette usage within the State.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on important health issues affecting people in Hawai'i.

Respectfully submitted,


Holly Kessler
Executive Director