



March 12, 2021

To: The House Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection
Rep. Nicole E. Lowen, Chair
Rep. Lisa Marten, Vice Chair

Re: **Strong Support** of SB502, SD1, PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE I OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE STATE OF HAWAII TO GUARANTEE ALL INDIVIDUALS THE RIGHT TO HAVE A CLEAN AND HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

Hrg: March 15, 2021 at 3:00 PM at Capitol Room 225 and Videoconference

The Hawai'i Public Health Association (HPHA) is a group of over 400 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. Issues around social justice and equity in areas that extend beyond the traditional context of health (e.g., education, digital equity, cultural sensitivity), can have profound impacts on health equity and well-being.

HPHA strongly **supports** SB502, SD, which proposes a constitutional amendment to Article I, the Hawaii Bill of Rights. If approved by voters, this amendment would guarantee individuals the right to a clean and healthy environment, including pure water, clean air, healthy ecosystems, and a stable climate, and to the preservation of the natural, cultural, scenic and healthful qualities of the environment. The inclusion of this self-executing fundamental right in Article I would complement, not be redundant with, the existing recognized role of government as public trustee in Article IX.

A clean and healthy environment are necessary conditions for the health and well-being of the people of Hawai'i. Article 1 will ensure this these conditions are preserved for generations. Additionally, it will encourage sustainable development and businesses that protect the environment protective while supporting economic growth. It will grow Hawai'i in a way that reflects the natural, cultural, and healthy values of Hawai'i, rather than compromising them.

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

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Claire Townsend Ing', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Claire Townsend Ing, DrPH
Legislative Committee Chair
Hawai'i Public Health Association