



DATE 22 March 2021

To: Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair
Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Health

Senator Mercado Kim, Chair
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Higher Education

Re: Strong Support to OPPOSE HB 1296 RELATING TO STATE FUNDS

Hrg: 23 March 2021, 3:15 PM in conference room 3229 & 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. Therefore, as stewards of public health, HPHA is advocating for equity in all policies.

HPHA strongly opposes HB 1296, which would repeal the Tobacco Prevention and Control Trust Fund. For over 20 years Hawaii's Tobacco Prevention and Control Trust Fund has reduced the burden of tobacco in our state, saving lives and healthcare costs. Despite significant declines in smoking rates for both adults and youth smoking rates, there is still a substantial need to continue support for anti-tobacco efforts in Hawaii. Tobacco use still remains the leading cause of preventable death and disease; responsible for 1,400 deaths annually and costing \$526 million in annual healthcare costs in Hawai'i. Additionally, e-cigarette use is a major public health issue as it has reach epidemic levels among youth.

HB 1296 will eliminate all the progress that has been made and will impede important public health efforts moving forward. Please OPPOSE HB 1296, which will repeat the Tobacco Prevention and Control Trust Fund.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Leocadia Conlon'.

J. Leocadia Conlon, PhD, MPH, PA-C
Legislative Committee Co-Chair
Hawaii Public Health Association