



March 17, 2019

To: Rep. Roy M. Takumi, Chair
Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Vice Chair
Rep. Chris Lee, Chair
Rep. Joy A. San Buenaventura, Vice Chair

Hrg: March 20, 2019 at 2:00 PM at Capitol Room 329

Re: Strong Support of SB1009 SD2 HD1, Relating to Flavored Tobacco Products

The Hawaii Public Health Association is a group 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.

HPHA strongly supports SB1009 SD2 HD1, which would end the sale of flavored tobacco products, including flavored e-liquids and menthol cigarettes.

Hawai'i is already experiencing a youth vaping epidemic. Studies have shown that 8 in 10 kids start with a flavored tobacco product. It's no coincidence that the rise in youth vaping has coincided with an explosion of sweet e-liquid flavors used to hook kids. With more than 15,500 flavors, these products are being irresponsibly marketed – who is the industry really targeting with flavors like Fruit Hoops, Sour Straws, or Cookie Monsta?

It's also critical to include menthol cigarettes in the flavored tobacco ban. Menthol cigarettes are a popular starter product, as it has cooling properties that mask the harshness of tobacco smoke and nicotine. The tobacco industry has a long history of marketing menthol cigarettes to youth and vulnerable groups, such as the Native Hawaiian community, and has led to health disparities.

We must end the sale of candy-flavored tobacco to protect our youth from a lifetime of addiction. The industry is promoting flavors that mimic popular food or candy to hide the fact that they contain nicotine and with more kids who were never smokers using these products, we have an urgent need to act. HPHA strongly supports SB1009 SD2 HD1 and ask you to pass this out of committee.

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

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Holly Kessler". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Holly Kessler
Executive Director
Hawaii Public Health Association