



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Written Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Finance
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by

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and

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SB 2495 SD3 HD1 – RELATING TO ELECTRONIC SMOKING DEVICES

Chair Luke, Vice Chairs Nishimoto and Johanson, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i Cancer Center supports this bill.

The UH Cancer Center is one of only 68 institutions in the U.S. that hold the prestigious National Cancer Institute (NCI) designation, and is the only NCI-designated center in the Pacific. The NCI designation provides greater access to federal funding and research opportunities. More importantly, it gives the people of Hawai'i and the Pacific region access to innovative and potentially life-saving clinical trials without the necessity of traveling to the mainland.

Our consuming passion at the UH Cancer Center is to be a world leader in eliminating cancer through research, education and improved patient care. Because tobacco consumption is a leading preventable cause of cancer, we take all issues related to tobacco in Hawai'i very seriously. Whereas the UH Cancer Center always has supported strong tobacco control measures in Hawai'i, the recent emergence of e-cigarettes presents new challenges for tobacco control and tobacco-related legislation.

The UH Cancer Center perspective on e-cigarettes is informed by the scientific literature, including original published research by our own faculty. Despite the complexities of the larger debate regarding e-cigarettes, we believe this bill represents reasonable legislation that balances the rights of adults to use e-cigarettes in appropriate venues while restricting the use of e-cigarettes in public places where conventional cigarettes also are banned. We also support the prohibition of the sale of e-cigarettes to minors, and we support the provisions in this bill that enhance the ability of authorities to enforce these laws.

As scientific research on e-cigarettes progresses, we will have a stronger basis to adjust laws according to evidence. At the present time, however, caution is warranted. As others have noted, the FDA currently does not regulate e-cigarettes, and thus the consumer has no assurances regarding e-cigarette ingredients. Further, because of the novelty of e-cigarettes, the long term effects of using these devices are unknown. A further concern, not often discussed, is the potential for e-cigarettes to be used as drug delivery devices for substances other than nicotine.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge you to pass this bill.