



**TESTIMONY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA
THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, 2026**

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

H.B. NO. 1563, RELATING TO TOBACCO PRODUCTS.

BEFORE THE:

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

DATE: Wednesday, February 4, 2026 **TIME:** 9:00 a.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 329

TESTIFIER(S): Anne E. Lopez, Attorney General, or
Chelsea N. Okamoto, Deputy Attorney General

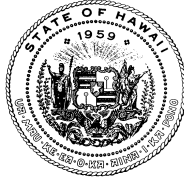
Chair Takayama and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General (Department) supports this bill and offers the following comments.

This bill would repeal part of section 328J-11.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), that currently preempts county ordinances regulating the sale of tobacco products, and would amend section 328J-15, HRS. Hawaii's youth has been disproportionately affected by the nationwide vaping epidemic, and the Department supports restoring counties' authority to adopt more stringent ordinances to regulate the sales of these harmful and addictive products that are targeted at our youth.

The Department is concerned that the additional wording on page 6, lines 12–14 and lines 19-21, could be inadvertently interpreted to limit counties' existing authority to regulate smoking. Accordingly, the Department recommends adopting the approach set forth in House Bill No. 1117 (2025), which would repeal section 328J-11.5, HRS, in its entirety and eliminate the need to amend section 328J-15, HRS. Alternatively, the Department recommends amending page 6, line 13, to read "regulate smoking or the sale of cigarettes, tobacco products, and" amending page 6, line 19, to read "enacting ordinances that regulate smoking or the sale of cigarettes,"

We respectfully ask the Committee to pass this bill with our recommended revisions. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO
P.O. Box 3378
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

**Testimony in SUPPORT of H.B. 1563
RELATING TO TOBACCO PRODUCTS**

REPRESENTATIVE GREGG TAKAYAMA, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Hearing Date: February 04, 2026, 9:00 AM

Room Number: Conference Room 329
and Videoconference

1 **Fiscal Implications:** None

2 **Department Position:** The Department of Health (DOH) supports House Bill 1563 (H.B. 1563) to
3 reestablish the legal authority of Hawaii's counties to enact policies that regulate the sale of
4 cigarettes, tobacco products, and electronic smoking devices (ESDs) that do not conflict with
5 and are more stringent than state law.

6 **Department Testimony:** H.B. 1563 repeals existing law that preempts all local ordinances or
7 regulations that regulate the sale of cigarettes and tobacco products including ESDs. Prior to
8 [Act 206, HB1895 CD1, 2018 Hawaii Session Laws \(HSL\)](#) that amended Section 328J-11.5, HRS,
9 county residents and elected officials rallied to pass regulations to protect the most vulnerable
10 members of their communities from the sale and promotion of tobacco products.

11 Geographic tobacco related disparities are a serious public health problem in Hawaii and
12 innovative, community-based solutions are needed. While 9% of adults in the general
13 population smoke, adults in Hawaii County have the highest prevalence of smoking at 14.5%.¹
14 Smoking rates within some communities are higher such as in Puna/Ka'u (20.7%) and

¹ Hawaii'i IBIS - Query Result - Hawaii's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) Data - Cigarettes - current smoker. Accessed January 30, 2026. https://hhdw.org/report/query/result/brfss/SmokeCurrent/SmokeCurrentCrude11_.html

1 Lahaina/Wailuku (15.4%).² For young adults ages 18-24, Maui County had the highest current
2 ESD use at 25% compared to Hawaii County (23%), Honolulu (21%) and Kauai (16%).³ According
3 to the 2023 Hawaii Youth Risk Behavior Survey results, Hawaii and Maui County high school
4 youth reported current ESD use at 15%, compared to Kauai and Honolulu at 12%.⁴ In 2023,
5 while there was an uptick in middle school ESD use overall, Hawaii County middle schoolers still
6 had the highest prevalence for all measures including ever (22%), current (14%), frequent (5%),
7 and daily (4%) use.^{5,6,7,8} Counties and communities are concerned over the continued
8 marketing of tobacco products and want the ability to respond to pressing local needs,
9 especially in jurisdictions that bear a greater burden of tobacco use.

10 According to Julie Aoki in the Journal of Law and Medical Ethics, “From a health equity
11 standpoint, the use of local knowledge to forge community-specific solutions enables localities
12 to employ a targeted approach to combat health disparities and ensue equitable access to
13 better public health.”⁹ Hawaii’s counties understand their youth and must be empowered to
14 respond to policy requests from communities that are most affected.

² Hawai‘i IBIS - Query Result - Hawai‘i’s Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) Data - Cigarettes - current smoker. Accessed January 30, 2026. https://hhdw.org/report/query/result/brfss/SmokeCurrent/SmokeCurrentCrude11_.html

³ Hawai‘i IBIS - Query Result—Hawai‘i’s Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) Data—Cigarettes—Current E-cig. (2022). Retrieved January 27, 2025, from https://hhdw.org/report/query/result/brfss/SmokeECigsCurr/SmokeECigsCurrCrude11_.html

⁴ Hawai‘i IBIS - Query Result—Hawai‘i Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) Data—Electronic vapor product—Current use, High Schools, County-level. (2023). Retrieved January 24, 2025, from https://hhdw.org/report/query/result/yrbs/VaporCurr/VaporCurr_HS_CNTY.html

⁵ Hawai‘i IBIS - Query Result—Hawai‘i Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) Data—Electronic vapor product—Ever use, Middle Schools, County-level. (2023). Retrieved January 27, 2025, from https://hhdw.org/report/query/result/yrbs/VaporEver/VaporEver_MS_CNTY.html

⁶ Hawai‘i IBIS - Query Result—Hawai‘i Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) Data—Electronic vapor product—Current use, Middle Schools, County-level. (2023). Retrieved January 24, 2025, from https://hhdw.org/report/query/result/yrbs/VaporCurr/VaporCurr_MS_CNTY.html

⁷ Hawai‘i IBIS - Query Result—Hawai‘i Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) Data—Electronic vapor product—Frequent use, Middle Schools, County-level. (2023). Retrieved January 27, 2025, from https://hhdw.org/report/query/result/yrbs/VaporFreq/VaporFreq_MS_CNTY.html

⁸ Hawai‘i IBIS - Query Result—Hawai‘i Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) Data—Electronic vapor product—Daily use, Middle Schools, County-level. (2023). Retrieved January 27, 2025, from https://hhdw.org/report/query/result/yrbs/VaporDaily/VaporDaily_MS_CNTY.html

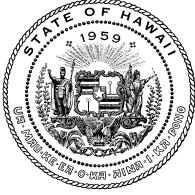
⁹ Julie Ralston Aoki et al., *Maximizing Community Voices to Address Health Inequities: How the Law Hinders and Helps*, 45 J. Law Med. Ethics, 11 (2017)

1 Historically, local communities in Hawaii have been visionaries in adopting strong and
2 innovative public health and tobacco control policies that changed social norms across the
3 entire state. Smoke-free restaurants, worksites, beaches and parks, and automobiles with
4 minors inside are examples of public health protective ordinances that were generated by
5 counties. Hawaii's landmark legislation, the Tobacco 21 Law (Act 122, 2015 HSL), was initially
6 introduced and passed by the Hawaii County Council in 2014.

7 The DOH supports H.B. 1563 as an important public health and social justice measure to
8 support community-based innovations to protect and advance the health and opportunities for
9 adults and keiki wherever they live in Hawaii.

10 **Offered Amendments:** None

11 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



**STATE HEALTH PLANNING
AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH - KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO

JOSH GREEN, MD
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'
KENNETH S. FINK, MD, MGA, MPH
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH
KA LUNA HO'ŌKELE
JOHN C. (JACK) LEWIN, MD
ADMINISTRATOR

February 4, 2026

TO: HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH
Representative Gregg Takayama, Chair
Representative Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair
Honorable Members

FROM: John C. (Jack) Lewin, MD, Administrator, SHPDA, and Sr. Advisor to
Governor Josh Green, MD on Healthcare Innovation

RE: **HB 1563 -- RELATING TO TOBACCO PRODUCTS**

HEARING: Wednesday, February 4, 2026 @ 09:00 am; Conference Room 329

POSITION: SUPPORT with COMMENTS

Testimony:

SHPDA strongly supports HB1563. We believe this bill will restore counties' authority to adopt and enforce more stringent local ordinances regulating the sale of cigarettes, tobacco products, and electronic smoking devices, rather than having to wait for state law to preempt stronger county protections.

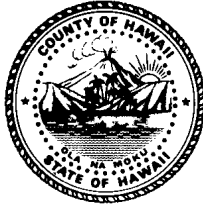
This is a practical public health step that allows for faster, locally targeted responses to youth vaping and tobacco harms, especially in rural and neighbor island communities. Neighbor island communities know their keiki and the realities of their own retail environments, schools, and youth social patterns sometimes far better than any statewide process can capture in real time. Restoring county authority allows them to act quickly with common-sense, community based protections, without waiting for the us at the State to move first while products, marketing, and access points move at a rapid pace.

SHPDA defers to the Hawai'i Department of Health and the counties on technical implementation details and fiscal impacts, and reiterates its support for HB1563 with an emphasis on clarity and accountability.

Thank you for hearing HB 1563

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify. -- Jack Lewin MD, Administrator, SHPDA

Jennifer Kagiwada
Council Member District 2 South Hilo



Office: (808) 961-8272
jennifer.kagiwada@hawaiicounty.gov

LATE

HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL - DISTRICT 2

25 Aupuni Street • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

LATE

DATE: February 3, 2026
TO: House Committee on Health
FROM: Jennifer Kagiwada, Council Member
Council District 2
SUBJECT: HB 1563

Aloha Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, and Committee Members,

I strongly support HB1563. Reauthorizing Counties to regulate the sale of tobacco products allows for even more opportunities for innovative policies at the local level. County legislators are not being lobbied by tobacco industry representatives, which means they are in a position, to more easily pass laws that put public health for our residents first. Cutting back on tobacco sales and use can improve public health and reduce health care costs associated with tobacco related illnesses, a benefit to us all.

Counties have a strong track record of passing successful tobacco policies, with less interference from big tobacco companies. Hawai'i County has a good history of helping to pass public health policies such as Tobacco 21 and smoke-free air laws.

Hawai'i County and the City and County of Honolulu recently passed legislation ending the sale of flavored tobacco and were met with an overwhelming amount of public support. However these laws cannot be enacted until the county authority is restored.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jenn Kagiwada".

Jenn Kagiwada



Hawaii COPD Coalition

P O Box 240053

Honolulu, HI 96824

hicopd@gmail.com

(808)699-9839

January 30, 2026

RE: **Please hear and Pass HB1573, Relating to Health**

Dear Chair Takayama and Vice Chair Keohukapu-Lee Loy and members of the House Health Committee:

This measure is extremely critical to the health of the children of our state and our entire state as well. **Please hear AND pass HB1573** which would penalize any manufacturer and party selling products not in the directory in compliance with federal regulations and state laws.

I am Executive Director of the Hawaii COPD Coalition and serve over 45,000 Hawaii adults diagnosed with COPD in Hawaii (with an estimated equal number still undiagnosed). Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease or COPD is an umbrella of diseases which include emphysema, chronic bronchitis and chronic asthma. Since 2007, I have worked in Hawaii, nationally and internationally with countless people who have had their lungs and lives horribly affected by tobacco and nicotine. Many of these people have become disabled and unable to perform jobs and hobbies they enjoyed, spending a lot more time and resources with healthcare providers and requiring support from society than they or any of us would like.

- This directory bill will ban all tobacco products that aren't on a pre-approved list of 39 products from the FDA.
- Passing this will remove thousands of different e-cigarette products currently available for purchase.
- Most products targeting youth will be made illegal, helping keep our keiki safe from Big Tobacco.
- California has established a similar practice to help ensure only approved products are sold in their state.

Please help protect the lungs and lives of our people from flavored and mislabeled nicotine products. We urge you to **please HEAR and vote in favor of HB1573 pass it out of committee only FDA approved and authorized ESDs are allowed to be sold in our state.** The Hawaii COPD Coalition thanks you very much for your careful consideration of this most important and timely bill.

Very truly yours,

Valerie Chang

Valerie Chang

Executive Director



HB1563 Allows Counties to Regulate Tobacco Regulations

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair

Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair

Wednesday, Feb. 4, 2026: 9:00: Room 329 Videoconference

ALOHA CHAIR, VICE CHAIR, AND DISTINGUISHED COMMITTEE MEMBERS. My name is Alan Johnson. I am the ad hoc leader of the Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition (HSAC), a statewide organization for substance use disorder and co-occurring mental health disorder treatment and prevention agencies and recovery-oriented services including transitional housing.

Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition Supports HB1563.

HSAC is in full support to regulate e-cigarettes to children because of the huge impact that vaping has with children.

- Counties have demonstrated their capability to manage tobacco-related policies.
- Giving the counties the freedom to manage their own regulations at the point of sale for tobacco products helps them to better respond to their constituents.
- The counties support this measure as it was part of the Hawai'i Association of Counties legislative package.
- This measure does not affect tax.

Giving counties the ability to quickly address the unique health needs of their communities will result in better overall health.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify and are available for questions.



HB1563 Allows Counties to Regulate Tobacco Products

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair

Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair

Wednesday, Feb. 4, 2026: 09:00: Room 329 & Videoconference

*ALOHA CHAIR, VICE CHAIR, AND DISTINGUISHED COMMITTEE MEMBERS.
My name is Brian Baker. I am the President and CEO for Hina Mauka, a mental health and substance use disorder treatment and prevention agency for thousands of adults and adolescents on Oahu and Kauai, including recovery-oriented services and housing transitional living programs.*

Hina Mauka **supports HB1563** and provides this testimony as a major treatment and prevention provider, as well as a member of the Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition (HSAC).

We are in full support of regulating e-cigarettes to children due to the catastrophic health impacts of vaping on our children.

Given that the counties have repeatedly demonstrated their ability to manage tobacco policies, and their on-the-ground responses to their unique situations will cut the time it takes to build a response, HB1563 makes sense.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony.



**Parents And
Children Together**
BUILDING THE RELATIONSHIPS
THAT MATTER MOST

ParentsAndChildrenTogether.org

TESTIMONY ON HB 1563 – IN SUPPORT RELATING TO TOBACCO PRODUCTS

TO: Chair Takayama, Vice-Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, & Members,
House Committee on Health
Chair Marten, Vice-Chair Olds, & Members,
House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness
FROM: Trisha Kajimura, PACT Vice-President of Strategy and External Affairs
Ryan Kusumoto, PACT President & CEO
DATE: February 4, 2026, 9:00 AM

Parents and Children Together (PACT) supports HB 1563. HB 1563 repeals existing law that preempts local ordinances or regulations that regulate the sale of tobacco products, including electronic smoking devices. This will allow counties to adopt ordinances that regulate the sale of tobacco and vape products.

Founded by residents of Kuhio Park Terrace in 1968, PACT is a statewide community-based organization providing a wide array of innovative and educational social services to families in need. Assisting more than 18,000 people across the state annually, we help identify, address, and successfully resolve challenges through our 20 programs. Among our services are early education programs, domestic violence prevention and intervention programs, child abuse prevention and intervention programs, childhood sexual abuse supportive group services, child and adolescent behavioral health programs, sex trafficking intervention, poverty prevention and community building programs.

PACT's mission is to work together with Hawaii's children, individuals, and families to create safe and promising futures. Allowing the tobacco/e-cig industry to prey on youth does not empower youth to choose the futures they want for themselves. Currently, flavors in tobacco and e-cig products attract youth to try them and the nicotine in these products creates an addiction. It is estimated that the tobacco industry is spending \$22.2 million annually to market products in Hawaii. (<https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-us/hawaii>). Let's give our youth a better chance for freedom from predatory marketing and the opportunity to establish good health.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Please contact me at (808) 847-3285 or tkajimura@pacthawaii.org if you have any questions.

Helping Hawai'i Live Well

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TO: House Committee on Health & Human Services
FROM: Bryan L. Talisayan, Mental Health America of Hawaii
RE: H.B. 1563 – Relating to Tobacco Products
POSITION: Support
DATE: February 2nd, 2026

Chair and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of H.B. 1563. Although H.B. 1563 is framed as a tobacco-control measure, it is also directly relevant to mental health and behavioral health outcomes, particularly for youth and young adults. Tobacco and electronic smoking devices are not only physical health risks; they are highly addictive substances that affect brain development, emotional regulation, anxiety, and mood, especially when exposure begins during adolescence.

From a behavioral health perspective, nicotine addiction is associated with increased anxiety, heightened stress responses, sleep disruption, and difficulty with concentration and impulse control. These effects can exacerbate existing mental health conditions and interfere with prevention, early intervention, and treatment efforts. For youth, early nicotine exposure is linked to long-term patterns of substance use and co-occurring mental health challenges.

H.B. 1563 is important because it preserves and strengthens county authority to enact tobacco and electronic smoking device regulations that are more protective than state law. This local authority is critical. Counties are often best positioned to respond quickly to emerging public health trends, including youth vaping and targeted marketing practices that disproportionately impact vulnerable populations.

From a systems and prevention standpoint, allowing counties to implement stronger safeguards supports several key public policy goals:

Helping Hawai'i Live Well

- **Primary prevention of addiction**, reducing future demand on mental health and substance use treatment systems
- **Protection of youth mental and emotional development** during critical stages of brain growth
- **Reduction of behavioral health disparities**, particularly in communities with higher exposure to tobacco marketing
- **Alignment with evidence-based public health strategies** that address root causes rather than downstream consequences

Mental health and wellness policy does not begin at the clinic door. It begins with upstream decisions that limit exposure to addictive substances and reduce environmental risk factors that undermine resilience and well-being. H.B. 1563 supports that upstream approach by empowering local governments to protect their communities.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the committee to pass H.B. 1563.

Thank you for your time, leadership, and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,



Bryan L. Talisayan
Executive Director

HB-1563

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 9:42:03 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cori Takesue	Lanai Community Health Center	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB 1563. Tobacco use continues to be the leading cause of preventable death across most age groups. 1,400 people die in Hawaii each year from tobacco use, with half of the smokers dying from a tobacco-related disease. Tobacco use cuts a decade off the average smoker's life. E-cigarette use continues to be a significant problematic behavior amongst our youth. In Hawaii, more than 13% of high schoolers and 10% of middle schoolers have reported using e-cigarettes in 2023. As a tobacco treatment specialist and behavioral health provider, I am seeing firsthand how our youth have been drawn into using e-cigarettes due to the attractive marketing tactics and flavours only to then develop difficulties with stopping their use due to the addictive nature of nicotine. We need to restore county authority to regulate tobacco products so that our county can start making changes to limit and prevent access of these products to our youth. 82% of registered Hawaii voters support restoring county authority so we are asking that you support HB1563 so that we can take the necessary steps to improve the overall health of our keiki. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Cori



Hearing on 2-4-26

Testimony in Strong Opposition to House Bill 1563

Dear House Health and Human Services/Homelessness Committees,

The Hawaii Smokers Alliance STRONGLY OPPOSES HB 1563) relating to the ridiculous idea that State law is subordinate to County Ordinances.

House Bill 380 is strongly opposed for the following reasons:

1. Existing and future bans and taxes by counties won't fit the state's needs.
2. Counties passing additional regulations place in question the tax revenue that various health organizations depend on at the state level, including but not limited to the Center Research Center. This includes the banning of product lines which can no longer be taxed.
3. In addition, the State House promised businesses and constituents just a few years ago that State Control would be maintained. People are counting on that promise being upheld.

Respectfully request that this deeply troubling bill not leave the HLT/HSB committees. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Michael Zehner, Co-chair of the Hawaii Smokers Alliance.

808-952-0275. Hawaiiismokersalliance.net



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HIPHI Initiatives

Coalition for a
Tobacco-Free Hawai'i

Community-Based Research &
Evaluation

Community Health
Worker Initiatives

Environmental Health

Hawai'i Climate Change and Health
Working Group

Hawai'i Drug & Alcohol-Free Coalitions

Hawai'i Immunization Coalition

Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition

Hawai'i Public Health Training Hui

Healthy Eating + Active Living

Kūpuna Collective/Healthy Aging &
Community Living

Public Health Workforce Development

Date: February 3, 2026

To: Representative Gregg Takayama, Chair
Representative Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Health

RE: Strong Support for HB 1563, Relating to Tobacco Products

Hrg: Wednesday, February 4, 2026, at 9:00 AM, Room 329

The Coalition for a Tobacco-Free Hawai'i, a program of Hawai'i Public Health Institute¹ is in **Strong Support of HB 1563**, which would restore the counties' ability to regulate the sale of cigarettes, tobacco products, and electronic smoking devices. If this ability is restored, the counties would be able to enact ordinances that are more stringent than state law.

Counties want to act.

Since 2017, youth use of electronic smoking devices has soared, with flavors being a major driver. The problem is statewide, but over the years has been felt more acutely in our counties with prevalence rates well above the state average. Because of these alarming numbers, three out of four counties have now passed ordinances to end the sale of all flavored tobacco products within their counties. The councils and mayors worked with youth to pass these policies, though they are unable to go into effect without state legislation. By passing HB 1563, the counties will be able to enact these important policies.

Restoring the county's authority will protect local residents and address disparities.

Counties have a long history of being proactive in adopting innovative tobacco control policies based on community concerns and needs. All counties passed the clean indoor air law (smoke-free workplaces) before the state passed legislation, and Hawai'i Island raised the age to 21 to purchase tobacco products first; in fact, they were the fourth jurisdiction in the nation to do so. Currently, state law curtails the counties' power to enact policies relating to the sale of tobacco and electronic smoking devices. This inability to act is of particular concern, as both high school and middle school students continue to utilize e-cigarettes, a product that has grown exponentially in innovation, product sales, nicotine content and youth appeal. Meanwhile, the tobacco industry continues to develop, market, and promote new flavored products like nicotine pouches that are growing in popularity among youth. According to an independent poll conducted by Ward Research in the Fall of 2025 on behalf of the Coalition, 82% of registered Hawai'i voters believe counties should have the ability to regulate tobacco products at the point of sale.²



States should provide a foundation to build on—basic protections and best practices to reduce the burden of tobacco in the state. However, local governments should have the ability to strengthen those protections based on the needs of their communities.

Currently counties are unable:

- To take legislative and regulatory action through retail and sales strategy to protect their children, youth, and adults.
- To enact public health, evidence-based strategies by restricting local policies and regulations on pricing and access, which are proven to reduce tobacco consumption and initiation, which could include the sale of tobacco in pharmacies and creating flavor restrictions.

Preemption benefits the tobacco industry.

Restricting local control is a known tobacco industry strategy. The tobacco industry works to “preempt” local governments from passing tobacco prevention and control policies. This action creates a more favorable situation for tobacco companies because it is easier to focus efforts on statewide policies versus county or city-level policies..

We applaud the Legislature for helping to strengthen our county's authority on tobacco sales by considering this measure, and thank this committee for your consideration of HB 1563.

We respectfully ask you to pass this measure.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin Ramirez". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.

Kevin Ramirez
Coalition for a Tobacco-Free Hawai'i Program Manager
Hawai'i Public Health Institute

1 The Coalition for a Tobacco-Free Hawai'i (Coalition) is a program of the Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI) that is dedicated to reducing tobacco use through education, policy, and advocacy. With more than two decades of history in Hawai'i, the Coalition has led several campaigns on enacting smoke-free environments, including being the first state in the nation to prohibit the sale of tobacco and electronic smoking devices to purchasers under 21 years of age.

2 This study by Ward Research, Inc. summarizes findings from a telephone/online survey among n=741 Hawai'i registered voters (maximum sampling error +/- 3.7%), conducted between October 3 to November 1, 2025.

Wednesday, February 4, 2026; 9:00a.m.
Conference Room 329 & Video Conference

House Committee on Health

To: Representative Gregg Takayama, Chair
Representative Sue Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair

From: Michael Robinson
Vice President, Government Relations & Community Affairs

**Re: HB 1563 – Testimony In Support
Relating to Tobacco Products**

My name is Michael Robinson, and I am the Vice President of Government Relations & Community Affairs at Hawai'i Pacific Health. Hawai'i Pacific Health is a not-for-profit health care system comprised of its four medical centers – Kapi'olani, Pali Momi, Straub and Wilcox and over 70 locations statewide with a mission of creating a healthier Hawai'i.

I am writing in SUPPORT of HB 1563 which repeals existing law that preempts local ordinances or regulations that regulate the sale of cigarettes, tobacco products, and electronic smoking devices and voids any existing local laws and regulations conflicting with the state law governing smoking. The measure further allows counties to adopt ordinances that regulate the sale of cigarettes, tobacco products, and electronic smoking devices that do not conflict with and are more stringent than the state law that governs smoking.

Tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable disease and death in the United States and in Hawai'i. Tobacco use is a serious public health problem in terms of the human suffering and loss of life it causes, as well as the financial burden it imposes on society and our healthcare system. In Hawaii, approximately \$611 million is spent annually on healthcare costs directly attributed to smoking. Smoking-related illnesses result in an estimated \$1.1 billion in lost productivity each year. E-cigarette use or vaping among youth and young adults has become a national public health concern. E-cigarettes are now the most popularly used tobacco product among youth and young adults, surpassing cigarettes. While smoking rates in Hawaii have decreased through the years, electronic smoking device (ESD) use has rapidly increased.

The counties have demonstrated that they are uniquely positioned to quickly address the health needs of their communities and have been utilizing that ability to great success. Historically, Hawaii has passed forward-thinking legislation to address the high usage of

tobacco products. These policies were first adopted at the county level to quickly address the counties' need to protect their communities from the relentless promotional targeting by tobacco companies. The county of Hawaii, City and County of Honolulu, and county of Maui, have introduced local legislation to prohibit the sale of flavored tobacco products to deal with the unique susceptibility of youths to the marketing of such products. This prohibition is not in conflict with and is more stringent than the restrictions of chapter 328J, Hawaii Revised Statutes. However, this legislation cannot be enacted until existing state law preempting county ordinances on the sale of tobacco products is repealed. HB 1563 would eliminate the preemption of local ordinances that regulate the sale of cigarettes, tobacco products and electronic smoking devices, thus enabling the counties to more effectively tackle the health and social problems related to smoking and ESD use.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1563

TO: Chair Takayama, Vice-Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, and Members

FROM: Michael Paul, Certified Tobacco Treatment Specialist

DATE: February 4, 2026 (9:00 AM)

Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHHRC) **strongly supports** HB 1563, which re-establishes county control over the sale of tobacco and nicotine products.

Prior to 2018, counties had the ability to regulate the sale of tobacco products in their communities. Counties in our state have been more responsive in quickly addressing the health and well-being of the people in their communities on this front. Our state's smoke-free air laws and the tobacco 21 law are examples of successful county level ordinances that were subsequently adopted statewide. Reauthorizing the counties to regulate the sale of tobacco products opens the possibilities for innovative policies at the local level, freeing the counties to find new and effective ways to address the public health challenges posed by tobacco use.

HHHRC's mission is to reduce harm, promote health, create wellness, and fight stigma in Hawai'i and the Pacific. We work with many individuals impacted by poverty, housing instability, and other social determinants of health. Many have behavioral health problems, including those related to substance use and mental health conditions.

With the ongoing support of the Hawai'i Community Foundation, HHHRC continues to offer smoking cessation services that are tailored to meet the needs of our state's LGBTQ+ people, and other priority populations through its [Hawai'i's Last Drag](#) (HLD) program. We work with individuals in ways that are most appropriate for their current needs, with trainings conducted in person or via phone, text, or videoconferencing. We provide smoking cessation products to assist them with quitting the consumption of smoked tobacco and other nicotine products.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



Chair - Representative Gregg Takayama
Vice Chair - Sue Keohokapu-Lee Loy
Members of the Committee on Health

On behalf of the Coalition for a Tobacco-Free Hawai'i's (CTFH) Youth Council, thank you for allowing us to submit testimony **in strong support of HB1563.**

The CTFH Youth Council is a nationally recognized group of youth leaders fighting to envision and create a Hawai'i centered on uplifting community public health beyond the reaches of Big Tobacco. Our council comprises middle school, high school, and college students, with representation from across Hawai'i's counties. We have been working to end the sale of flavored tobacco products for the past seven years.

We have worked hard over the years, the City and County of Honolulu, the County of Hawai'i, and the County of Maui have passed bills to end flavored tobacco sales in their communities. This sends a clear message to the State to protect our keiki and restore their authority to regulate tobacco sales. These county councils stood by the youth and community advocates in passing these bills, and we ask that you do the same by passing HB1563.

With federal tobacco control funding eliminated, it's important to have as many tools available to fight against Big Tobacco. Allowing counties to respond enables quicker action against emerging threats, fill gaps left by federal rollbacks, and prevent harm before it becomes widespread. The Coalition for a Tobacco-Free Hawai'i Youth Council urges the Committee to pass HB1563 to restore county authority to regulate tobacco sales.

Mahalo,
Coalition for a Tobacco-Free Hawai'i Youth Council

PARTIAL LIST OF SUPPORTERS

HEALTH ORGANIZATIONS

- 'Ohana Health Plan
- Adventist Health – Castle
- Aloha Care
- AMA/HMA Student Chapter at JABSOM
- American Academy of Pediatrics – Hawaii Chapter
- American Heart Association
- American Lung Association
- Bay Clinic Inc.
- Blue Zones Project
- Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids

- Coalition for a Drug-Free Hawaii
- Coalition for a Tobacco-Free Hawai'i (Hawai'i Public Health Institute)
- Hamakua Kohala Health Centers
- Hawaii – American Nurses Association (Hawaii-ANA)
- Hawaii COPD Coalition
- Hawaii Dental Hygienists' Association
- Hawaii Health and Harm Reduction Center
- Hawai'i Nurses' Association
- OPEIU Local 50
- Hawaii Public Health Association
- Hui No Ke Ola Pono
- Hui Ola Pono (UH Public Health Student Organization)
- Kaho'omiki; Hawaii Council of Physical Activity and Nutrition
- Kauai Rural Health Association
- Keiki Injury Prevention Coalition
- Na Lei Wili Area Health Education Center, Inc.
- The Queen's Health Systems
- Tobacco Prevention Project, Daniel K. Inouye College of Pharmacy
- University of Hawaii Student Health Advisory Council
- US COPD Coalition
- Waimānalo Health Center

HEALTH & COMMUNITY LEADERS

- Kathryn Akioka, RRT / TTS
- Joy Barua
- Forrest Batz, PharmD
- Frank Baum, MD
- Deborah Bond-Upson
- Dale Carstensen
- Valerie Chang Dyson
- Chee Danelle Cheng
- Bridgitte Daniel
- May Rose Dela Cruz, Dr. PH
- Andrew Fox, MD
- Shani Gacayan
- Donita Garcia

- Asaka Herman
- Pedro Haro, MPH
- Cyd Hoffeld
- Colleen Inouye, MD
- Lila Johnson
- Leilani Kailiawa
- Lehua Kaulukukui
- Ken Kozuma
- Mark Levin
- Loren Lindborg
- Katherine May, PsychD
- Bryan Mih, MD
- Kristin Mills
- Shelly Ogata
- Gregg Pacilio, PT
- Matthew Prellberg
- Jordan Ragasa
- Nathalie Razo
- Keenan Reader
- Crystal Robello
- Kimberly Golis-Robello
- Mary Santa Maria
- Anne Takata, DC
- Patty Kahanamoku-Teruya
- Chien-Wen Tseng, MD
- John A. Hau'oli Tomoso
- Jennifer Valera
- Cecilia Villafuerte
- Linda Weiner, MD
- Andre Weston, MDiv
- Matthew Wong

YOUTH & COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

- After-School All-Stars Hawaii
- American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO)
- Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs
- Bad Boys Football Club
- Big Island Interscholastic Federation (BIIF)
- Hale 'Ōpio Kaula'i Inc.
- Hawaii Children's Action Network
- Hawaii Interscholastic Athletic Directors Association

- Hawaii State Commission on Fatherhood
- Hawaii State Teachers Association (HSTA)
- Hawaii State Youth Commission
- Hawai'i Youth Climate Coalition
- Hawaii Youth Services Network
- Honolulu Youth Commission
- Kanu o ka 'Āina Learning Ohana (KALO)
- Kauai Path Inc.
- LearningBond
- Pacific American Foundation
- Parents for Public Schools of Hawai'i
- Partners in Development Foundation
- Residential Youth Services & Empowerment (RYSE)
- The Friends of Kamalani and Lydgate Park
- Waipahu Intermediate Youth For Safety

BUSINESSES

- Country Courier, LLC
- Hana Lima Physical Therapy
- Home Remedies Interior Design
- JCS Enterprises Inc.
- Pediatric Therapies Hawaii

O'AHU NEIGHBORHOOD BOARDS

- Kuliouou-Kalani Iki (02)
- Kaimuki (04)
- Diamond Head (05)
- Palolo (06)
- McCully-Moiliili (08)
- Makiki-Tantalua (10)
- Ala Moana/Kakaako (11)
- Nuuanu/Punchbowl (12)
- Downtown-Chinatown (13)
- Liliha/Puunui/Alewa (14)
- Aliamanu-Salt Lake (18)
- Aiea (20)
- Pearl City (21)
- Waipahu (22)
- Ewa (23)
- Mililani-Waipio (25)

- North Shore (27)
- Koolauloa (28)
- Kahaluu (29)
- Kaneohe (30)
- Kailua (31)
- Waimanalo (32)
- Mililani Mauka-Launani Valley (35)
- Nanakuli-Maili (36)

SCHOOLS

- Damien Memorial School
- Hawaii Association of Independent Schools (HAIS)
- Hawaii Council of Private Schools (HCPS)
- Holy Family Catholic Academy
- Island Pacific Academy
- Maryknoll School
- Maui Preparatory Academy
- Mid-Pacific Institute
- Roots School
- St. Andrew's Schools
- Saint Louis School

February 2, 2026

TO: Gregg Takayama, Chair
Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Health

FROM: Cigar Association of America, Inc.
(William Goo)

RE: **HB 1563** - Relating to Tobacco Products
Hearing Date: February 4, 2026
Time: 9:00 am

The Cigar Association of America, Inc. (CAA) **opposes HB 1563** which would enable the counties to supersede the State's regulatory authority over tobacco products.

CAA is the leading national trade organization representing the interests of manufacturers, importers, distributors, and major suppliers in the cigar and pipe tobacco industry. It is a key stakeholder in this discussion, as the proposed change has the potential to significantly impact its members and their ability to conduct business in Hawaii.

Statewide regulation ensures that prevention measures are clear, achievable and well implemented. These programs are designed and funded by the State, not the counties. The State law preemption model has been successful in seeing tobacco use in Hawaii reach the lowest level in decades and trends indicate continued decline¹. Establishing a change whereby counties would regulate the use of tobacco products will do little to change public health metrics. History has shown that where states have allowed this, consumers look at other alternatives including illicit markets.

If the counties are allowed to supersede State regulation, local businesses will lose the additional fuel and sundry purchases consumers make along with their tobacco purchases. Fragmented regulation also discourages businesses from broader investment in the State thereby limiting economic growth and jobs. Without regulatory control, the State will have little certainty over its future revenue projections. This would jeopardize management of the Cancer Research Fund, Trauma System Fund and more.

Statewide regulation ensures that compliance standards are uniform and fair across the State. When regulation is fragmented, it burdens law enforcement resources and

¹Based on data from the CDC's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) and the Hawaii Health Data Warehouse, the adult smoking rate has dropped from approximately 17.4% in 2004 to 8.1% in 2024.

inevitably forces more encounters in the community. Confusion between State and local law should not be the source of conflict between law enforcement and business owners. Nor should the State enable a county to issue greater restrictions that push vulnerable communities into illicit markets which are unregulated and untaxed.

CAA strongly opposes HB 1563 because it will destabilize the current regulatory model, complicate compliance, burden enforcement agencies and hurt local economies – setting the stage for future program deficits. Statewide preemption supports public health goals, facilitates compliance and balances the holistic needs of the State. Hawaii cannot afford to abrogate its responsibilities in this area.

Thank you for considering this testimony.



**Testimony to the House Joint Committee on Health, and Human Services and
Homelessness
Wednesday, February 4, 2026; 9:00 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 329
Via Videoconference**

RE: HOUSE BILL NO. 1563, RELATING TO TOBACCO PRODUCTS.

Chair Takayama, Chair Marten, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Primary Care Association (HPCA) is a 501(c)(3) organization established to advocate for, expand access to, and sustain high quality care through the statewide network of Community Health Centers throughout the State of Hawaii. The HPCA **SUPPORTS** House Bill No. 1563, RELATING TO TOBACCO PRODUCTS.

By way of background, the HPCA represents Hawaii's Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). FQHCs provide desperately needed medical services at the frontlines to over 150,000 patients each year who live in rural and underserved communities. Long considered champions for creating a more sustainable, integrated, and wellness-oriented system of health, FQHCs provide a more efficient, more effective and more comprehensive system of healthcare.

This bill, as received by your Committee, would:

- (1) Repeal existing law that provides that all local ordinances or regulations that regulate the sale of cigarettes, tobacco products, and electronic smoking devices are preempted and that existing local laws and regulations conflicting with the state law on smoking are null and void; and
- (2) Clarify that counties retain the authority to adopt ordinances that regulate the sale of cigarettes, tobacco products, and electronic smoking devices, as long as the ordinances do not conflict with and are more stringent than the State law on smoking.

The bill would take effect on July 1, 2026.

Testimony on House Bill No. 1563

Wednesday, February 4, 2026; 9:00 a.m.

Page 2

FQHCs have long seen first-hand how tobacco has literally destroyed the lives of our patients and their families. Because of the ubiquity of cigarettes, chewing tobacco, and now electronic smoking devices, the impacts of tobacco harms our citizenry on a generational basis with people experimenting at even earlier ages. Because of this, the HPCA supports efforts that would improve enforcement of existing regulation and create disincentives for consumers to use these products.

In 2018, the Hawaii State Legislature enacted Act 206 to establish the State policy that the sale of cigarettes, tobacco products, and electronic smoking devices is a matter of statewide concern, thus nullifying any local ordinances or policies that restricted the sale of these products that were in effect at that time. Since Act 206 was enacted, youth consumption of tobacco products has increased resulting in the American Lung Association giving the State of Hawaii an "F" for failing to prevent access to flavored tobacco products like menthol cigarettes and fruity-flavored electronic smoking products.

Because of this, the HPCA agrees with the Hawaii State Association of Counties and urges the State to allow the counties to enact more restrictions over the sale of tobacco products, including electronic smoking devices, in order to protect public health, safety, and welfare.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Public Affairs and Policy Director Erik K. Abe at 536-8442, or eabe@hawaiiipca.net.



Hawaii Medical Association

1360 South Beretania Street, Suite 200 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96814
Phone: 808.536.7702 • Fax: 808.528.2376 • hawaiimedicalassociation.org

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Representative Gregg Takayama, Chair

Representative Sue Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair

Date: February 4, 2026

From: Hawaii Medical Association (HMA)

Elizabeth Ann Ignacio MD - Chair, HMA Public Policy Committee

Christina Marzo MD and Robert Carlisle MD, Vice Chairs, HMA Public Policy Committee

RE HB 1563 RELATING TO TOBACCO PRODUCTS. Keiki Caucus; Cigarettes, Tobacco Products, and Electronic Smoking Devices; Sale; Regulation; County Authority

Position: **Support**

This measure would repeal existing law that preempts local ordinances or regulations that regulate the sale of cigarettes, tobacco products, and electronic smoking devices and voids any existing local laws and regulations conflicting with the state law governing smoking, and allow counties to adopt ordinances that regulate the sale of cigarettes, tobacco products, and electronic smoking devices that do not conflict with and are more stringent than the state law that governs smoking.

Youth vaping in Hawaii remains a significant public health challenge, with both local and national data demonstrating high rates of nicotine use among adolescents and persistence of the habit into young adulthood. In Hawaii, vaping has become widespread among students. According to *Understanding Youth Vaping in Hawaii*, 46% of high school students who vape are regularly vaping every day, indicating a high level of nicotine dependence among youth users.

Teen vaping exposes adolescents to nicotine addiction, harms brain development (affecting attention, learning, and mood), and increases the risk of respiratory symptoms and later use of combustible tobacco and other substances.

Hawaii physicians continue to see the harmful effects of nicotine addiction beginning in adolescence, and local flexibility is essential to address youth vaping trends that vary by community. HMA supports this measure that empowers counties to adopt more stringent regulations on the sale of cigarettes, tobacco products, and electronic smoking devices to better protect public health. Strengthening these protections today helps safeguard the long-term health of our keiki and future generations.

Thank you for allowing the Hawaii Medical Association to submit testimony in support of this measure.

REFERENCES AND QUICK LINKS

2026 Hawaii Medical Association Public Policy Coordination Team

Elizabeth A Ignacio, MD, Chair • Robert Carlisle, MD, Vice Chair • Christina Marzo, MD, Vice Chair
Linda Rosehill, JD, Government Relations • Marc Alexander, Executive Director

2026 Hawaii Medical Association Officers

Nadine Tenn-Salle, MD, President • Jerald Garcia, MD, President Elect • Elizabeth Ann Ignacio, MD, • Immediate Past President
Laeton Pang, MD, Treasurer • Thomas Kosasa, MD, Secretary • Marc Alexander, Executive Director

DeGracia, Daniel. "Understanding Youth Vaping in Hawaii ." *LivingHealthy.Hawaii.gov*, 9 Dec. 2025, livinghealthy.hawaii.gov/tobacco-free/vaping/.

Erythropel HC, Jabba SV, Silinski P, et al. Variability in Constituents of E-Cigarette Products Containing Nicotine Analogues. *JAMA*. 2024;332(9):753–755. doi:10.1001/jama.2024.12408

Whitacre TR, Crippen A, Monthrope M, et al. Tobacco product flavour policies in the USA *Tobacco Control* 2025;34:688-693.

Pattani, Aneri. "Many Young Adults Who Began Vaping as Teens Can't Shake the Habit." *KFF Health News*, 12 June 2024, www.kffhealthnews.org/news/article/many-young-adults-who-began-vaping-as-teens-cant-shake-the-habit/

2024 Hawaii Medical Association Officers

Elizabeth Ann Ignacio, MD, President • Nadine Tenn-Salle, MD, President Elect • Angela Pratt, MD, Immediate Past President
Jerris Hedges, MD, Treasurer • Thomas Kosasa, MD, Secretary • Marc Alexander, Executive Director

2024 Hawaii Medical Association Public Policy Coordination Team

Beth England, MD, Chair
Linda Rosehill, JD, Government Relations • Marc Alexander, Executive Director

To: House Committee on Health
Re: HB 1563 – Relating to Tobacco Products
Hawai'i State Capitol room 329 & Via Videoconference Wednesday,
February 4, 2026, 9:00 AM

Dear Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, I am writing in **SUPPORT of HB 1563**, which would allow counties to adopt ordinances that regulate the sale of cigarettes, tobacco products, and electronic smoking devices.

HCAN is dedicated to advocating for policies that protect and promote the health and well-being of Hawai'i's children. HB1563 is of significant importance to our mission, as it addresses the regulation of cigarettes, tobacco products, and electronic smoking devices; products that pose well-documented risks to youth health. By empowering counties to adopt more stringent regulations, this bill provides communities with the flexibility to respond to local needs and better safeguard keiki from the harms of tobacco and nicotine exposure.

Research consistently shows that early exposure to tobacco and nicotine increases the likelihood of long-term addiction and adverse health outcomes among children and adolescents. Statewide preemption of local tobacco control measures has historically limited the ability of counties to implement innovative or targeted policies that reflect local priorities or emerging public health challenges. Allowing counties to enact stronger regulations aligns with best practices in public health and supports efforts to reduce youth access to harmful products.

HB1563 strikes a balance by preserving the state's regulatory framework while enabling counties to tailor additional protections as needed. This approach encourages local innovation and responsiveness, which are critical in addressing disparities in tobacco use and exposure among Hawai'i's diverse communities. By removing barriers to local action, the bill supports a comprehensive, community-driven strategy to protect children from the dangers of tobacco and electronic smoking devices.

HCAN respectfully encourages the Legislature to advance HB1563 and ensure that counties have the authority to enact measures that reflect the unique needs of their communities. We recommend continued collaboration with county governments and community stakeholders to ensure that new ordinances are evidence-based and effectively implemented. This bill represents a meaningful step toward a healthier future for Hawai'i's keiki.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. Please **SUPPORT HB 1563**.



LATE

February 4, 2026

Representative Gregg Takayama, Chair
Representative Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Health

Representative Lisa Marten, Chair
Representative Ikaika Olds, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on
Human Services & Homelessness

**American Heart Association Testimony for HB 1563
Relating to Tobacco Products**

Aloha Chair Takayama, Chair Marten, Members of the Committees:

The American Heart Association is in strong support of repealing state preemption and restoring county authority to enact ordinances aimed at reducing tobacco sales in Hawai'i.

Flavored tobacco products including menthol, candy, and fruit-flavored e-cigarettes are aggressively marketed to youth and remain widely available near schools, recreation facilities, and neighborhoods. Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and Filipino communities experienced disproportionate rates of tobacco use and tobacco-related illness, due in part to targeted industry marketing, its historical inequities, and greater concentration of tobacco retailers in lower-income areas.

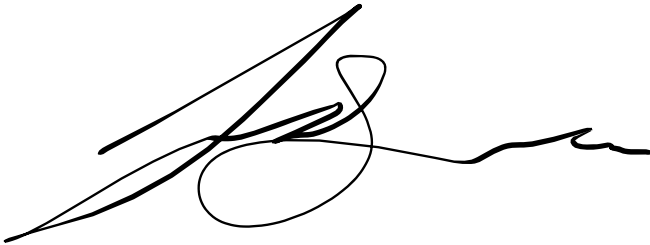
Hawai'i continues to face serious challenges related to tobacco use, youth vaping, and nicotine addiction. Right now, state law prevents Hawai'i counties from passing stronger tobacco control measures even when local elected officials and residents demand action. Repealing preemption would allow counties to implement strategies tailored to improve community needs without waiting for statewide legislation.

Hawai'i counties, local coalitions, and community leaders - including the Coalition for a Tobacco-Free Hawai'i, youth advocates, medical professionals, and school organizations - have repeatedly expressed support for stronger policies to reduce access to tobacco products and eliminate flavored tobacco sales. Communities elsewhere in the country with the authority to

pass local restrictions on flavored tobacco, tobacco retailer density, and licensing have seen significant reductions in youth initiation and sales to minors.

Tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable death in Hawaii, posing a significant public health threat that requires both local and state policy attention. We respectfully urge the legislature to repeal state preemption and allow Hawai'i's counties to adopt strong, community-driven tobacco control policies that reduce youth access, prevent addiction, and protect the long-term health and well-being of all Hawai'i families.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lauren Simpson-Gomez', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Lauren Simpson-Gomez

Hawai'i Government Relations Director

LATE

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair

Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 4, 2026

2:00 PM – Room 329

Testimony In Support of House Bill 1563 Relating to Tobacco Products

The American Lung Association is the leading organization working to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease, through research, education, and advocacy. The work of the American Lung Association in Hawai'i and across the nation is focused on four strategic imperatives: to defeat lung cancer; to improve the air we breathe; to reduce the burden of lung disease on individuals and their families; and to eliminate tobacco use and tobacco-related diseases.

The American Lung Association calls on Hawai'i officials to support House Bill 1563 which repeals existing law that preempted local ordinances or regulations that regulate the sale of cigarettes, tobacco products, and electronic smoking devices and nullified and voided any conflicting local laws and regulations.

The need for Hawai'i to protect youth from tobacco is more urgent than ever, with youth e-cigarette use reaching epidemic levels. According to the Centers for Disease Control, in 2019, the last year that CDC was able to collect data in comparable ways as previous years and (2021 was affected by school shutdowns and school-from-home protocol due to COVID-19), the nearly every 1 in 3 high schoolers in Hawai'i vape regularly. This is an over 70% increase in youth vaping rates since 2017. Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders have even higher vaping rates than the youth state average.¹

Preemption is a legal concept where a higher level of government restricts or even eliminates the authority of a lower level of government to regulate an issue. Federal laws can preempt state and local laws, and state laws can preempt local laws. As a practice, preemption can slow or stop community solutions addressing a wide range of health and social issues including tobacco, food, alcohol, and climate change.²

Enacting policies at the local level is one of the best ways to make progress in tobacco control. In fact, many tobacco control policies that have succeeded in Hawai'i have in fact been passed and tested at the local level, including smoke-free workplaces, smoke-free restaurants, restricting sales of tobacco to those 21 and over. We need to enact laws that are proven to reduce tobacco use.

By blocking the power of local elected officials to protect youth and failing to take any meaningful action at the state level, we risk another generation addicted to deadly tobacco products. Preventing local control over the sale and marketing of tobacco products has been a favorite tactic of the tobacco industry to stop the passage of effective policies to reduce tobacco use and save lives.

Hawai'i is a full diversity, where the needs of different counties vary widely. Because of this, we must give local governments the ability to develop the best laws to protect their citizens. The American Lung Association

¹ American Lung Association. *State of Tobacco Control – Hawai'i*. 2020

² Pertschuk, M, Pomeranz, JL, Aoki, JR, Larkin, MA, Paloma, M. Assessing the Impact of Federal and State Preemption in Public Health: A Framework for Decision Makers. *J Public Health Management Practice*. 2012



believes that local governments should be allowed to respond to public health issues, like the youth e-cigarette epidemic, in ways that work for their communities.

The American Lung Association in Hawai'i urges legislators to continue to support and advocate for policies to protect youth from tobacco use by allowing local governments to create solutions that work for them. We urge for your support of House Bill 1563.

Pedro Haro
Executive Director
American Lung Association in Hawai'i
pedro.haro@lung.org

LATE

Chair Gregg Takayama, Vice Chair Sue Lee-Loy, and Members of the Committee on Health

I write this in full support of HB1563.

I am now a senior in high school, and stepping back onto that campus filled me with powerful childhood memories. That moment was shattered when my former kindergarten teacher showed me a gallon sized bag filled with disposable vapes taken from students. Children as young as kindergarten are being exposed to and harmed by vaping. That reality is unacceptable.

At my current school, Baldwin High School on Maui, the crisis is impossible to ignore. My peers and I avoid bathrooms during instructional hours because we fear walking into groups of students vaping. It is nearly impossible to enter a classroom without knowing that at least one vape is present. Vaping has become so common that it no longer shocks students, and that normalization is both sad and terrifying.

The most devastating consequence of this epidemic is the lives it destroys. Two years ago, in October, we lost a close friend. She was someone I grew up with and someone whose family was deeply connected to mine. I spent countless afternoons with her at the travel agency her parents owned, a place my family often visited. Out of respect for her and her family, I will not share her name.

She was consumed by the addictive grip of vaping and crushed by the harsh and judgmental environment that surrounds youth who struggle. She felt trapped, isolated, and unseen. She took her own life. Her death was not inevitable. It was the result of a system that failed to protect her.

Please do not allow her story to fade into silence. This issue has gone too far. It is happening in our schools, in our classrooms, and in our communities right now. Ending the youth vaping epidemic is a responsibility we owe to the friend we lost and to the lives that can still be saved.

I write this in full support of HB1563.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Jeremiah
Wailuku

HB-1563

Submitted on: 1/31/2026 9:46:46 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessica Chang	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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HB-1563

Submitted on: 1/31/2026 10:23:39 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nathan Waters	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of this bill. I believe the county should have the authority to regulate tabasco produces and be able to enforce the laws that the county has already passed.

HB-1563

Submitted on: 1/31/2026 10:46:11 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patricia Blair	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

End the sale of flavored tobacco,products

HB-1563

Submitted on: 1/31/2026 11:38:46 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Josh Fowler	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT

HB1563 – Relating to Cancer Screening

Committee on Health & Homelessness / Committee on Human Services

Wednesday, February 7, 2026, 9:00 AM

My name is **Josh Fowler**, a resident of Kapolei. I am writing in **strong support** of HB1563, which would appropriate funds for a comprehensive cancer screening and awareness program within the Department of Health.

- This bill directly supports early detection for some of Hawai‘i’s most common and deadly cancers, including breast, cervical, colorectal, lung, and prostate cancer.
- Funding would support outreach, education, and screening services for underserved populations, including those who are uninsured or face barriers to preventive care.
- Early-stage cancer is far more treatable and less costly than late-stage disease. Investing in screenings is fiscally responsible public health policy.
- The bill also allows use of data from the Hawai‘i Tumor Registry and the national SEER program (Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results), which tracks cancer incidence and outcomes. This improves targeting and effectiveness of outreach.
- Cancer continues to be one of the leading causes of death in Hawai‘i. Closing the gap in screening and early diagnosis is essential to reduce preventable deaths.

Conclusion:

I respectfully urge the committee to pass HB1563. This legislation strengthens our public health system by investing in prevention, closing care gaps, and supporting data-driven outreach efforts that can save lives.

Sincerely,

Josh Fowler

Kapolei, Hawai‘i 96707

HB-1563

Submitted on: 1/31/2026 4:18:03 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
lynne matusow	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please accept this as testimony in support of HB1563. We must allow the counties to establish regulations that meet their needs regarding the regulation of tobacco products. Some of them want rules that are more stringent than those of the state, and it should be up to each county to set higher standards for the benefit of their residents.

HB-1563

Submitted on: 1/31/2026 4:38:28 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
tia pearson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This would restore counties' authority to regulate the sale of tobacco products. Tobacco and its products are unsafe for kids and adults.

Honolulu, Hawai'i County, and Maui County have already passed laws to end the sale of flavored tobacco products that target kids and teens. Those laws cannot take effect unless the state restores county authority. HB1563 would make that possible and allow local communities to protect public health.

HB-1563

Submitted on: 1/31/2026 5:14:07 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ashley de Coligny	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I am a Hawai'i resident writing in support of HB1563. This bill would restore local control and allow counties to regulate tobacco sales to protect our keiki. My county has already acted to end the sale of flavored tobacco, but those protections cannot take effect without state action. Please support HB1563 and allow counties to protect their communities.

Mahalo,
Ashley de Coligny
Kaneohe, HI

HB-1563

Submitted on: 1/31/2026 7:07:45 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
ANDREW ISODA	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I am a Hawai'i resident writing in support of HB1563. This bill would restore local control and allow counties to regulate tobacco sales to protect our keiki. My county has already acted to end the sale of flavored tobacco, but those protections cannot take effect without state action. Please support HB1563 and allow counties to protect their communities.

Mahalo,
Andrew Isoda
Lahaina, Mau'i

HB-1563

Submitted on: 1/31/2026 7:25:24 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John A. H. Tomoso	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

RE: HB1563

Aloha,

I understand that Counties in Hawai'i have been national leaders in tobacco regulation, but a 2018 state law has blocked them from acting. Honolulu, Hawai'i, and Maui County have all passed laws to end the sale of flavored tobacco products, yet none can take effect until the state law is repealed. Please repeal the state law to allow counties to pass ordinances to end the sale of flavored tobacco products.

Mahalo

John A. H. Tomoso+, MSW, ACSW

51 Ku'ula St., Kahului, HI 96732-2906

john.a.h.tomoso@gmail.com

HB-1563

Submitted on: 1/31/2026 9:28:17 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Natasha I Thomas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawai'i counties have been national leaders in tobacco regulation and it's time to end the 2018 state law that blocks them from acting. Flavored tobacco products attract teens and children. 90% of current middle and high school students that use e-cigarettes are using flavored e-cigarettes. Please pass this bill to allow laws ending the sale of flavored tobacco products to take effect in Honolulu, Hawai'i, and Maui County.

- Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable deaths.
- 1,400 people die in Hawai'i each year from tobacco use, cutting a decade off the average smoker's life.
- Half of smokers die from tobacco-related disease.
- In Hawai'i more than 13% of high schoolers and 10% of middle schoolers reported using e-cigarettes in 2023.
- 82% of registered Hawai'i voters support restoring county authority.

More personally, I have witnessed teens struggling with addiction to these flavored electronic vapes. The favors and smells appeal to our children. It needs to stop!

HB-1563

Submitted on: 1/31/2026 9:43:29 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michele Mitsumori	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I am a Hawai'i County resident writing in support of HB1563. Hawai'i County has already passed laws to end the sale of flavored tobacco products that target kids and teens, but these protections cannot take effect without state action.

HB1563 should restore local control and allow counties to regulate tobacco sales and protect our keiki.

Please support HB1563 and allow counties to protect our communities.

Mahalo,
Michele Mitsumori
Hilo

HB-1563

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 6:54:21 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Catherine M. Medeiros	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I am a Hawai'i resident writing in support of HB 1563. This bill would restore local control and allow counties to regulate tobacco sales to protect our keiki. My county has already acted to end the sale of flavored tobacco: however those protections cannot take effect corresponding state authorization. HB1563 would ensure taht counties can implement policies that reflect the needs and priorities of their youth and community.

Please support HB1563 and help safeguard the health and well-being of Hawai'i's children.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony,

C. Momi Medeiros

HB-1563

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 7:33:12 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marissa Ornellas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I am a Hawai'i resident writing in support of HB1563. This bill would restore local control and allow counties to regulate tobacco sales to protect our keiki. My county has not yet acted to end the sale of flavored tobacco, but perhaps could once the protections from state action have occurred. Please support HB1563 and allow counties to protect their communities.

Mahalo,
Marissa Ornellas

HB-1563

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 9:25:28 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shay Chan Hodges	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha: I am a Maui resident writing in support of HB1563. This bill would restore local control and allow counties like mine to regulate tobacco sales to protect our keiki. My county has already acted to end the sale of flavored tobacco, but those protections cannot take effect without state action. Please support HB1563 and allow counties to protect their communities.

Mahalo, Shay Chan Hodges

Judith F. Clark
48-218 Kamehameha Highway
808-499-9966
Judithforceclark@gmail.com
Kaneohe, Hawaii 96744

January 30, 2026

To: Representative Lisa Marten, Chair
And members of the Committee of Human Services and Homelessness

Testimony in Support of HB 1563 Relating to Tobacco Products

As a community advocate and the former Executive Director of Hawaii Youth Services Network who worked for non-profit organizations for 50 years, I strongly support HB 1563 which gives counties additional authority to regulate tobacco products.

Hawaii has a high rate of youth vaping and manufacturers target youth in their marketing efforts. Allowing counties to implement bans on the sale of flavored tobacco products will reduce youth tobacco usage and prevent the serious health problems that result from tobacco use.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Judith F. Clark". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Judith F. Clark, MPH

HB-1563

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 12:26:02 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ryan Samonte	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT

HB-1563

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 12:28:51 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Younghee Overly	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for hearing this bill to restore local control and allow counties to regulate tobacco sales to protect our keiki.

HB 1563

I am writing as a retired neighbor island pediatrician in strong support of HB 1563 to reverse preemption of County powers to regulate health issues locally. Since 2018, when the State Legislature voted for this usurpation of County regulation of the sale of tobacco products, the Legislature, at the urging of the tobacco lobby, has found itself unable to enact a tobacco flavor ban . Flavor bans have been proven to greatly reduce electronic tobacco use in children in other states that have been less reluctant to protect their children. Already Hawaii has one of the highest rates of vaping in the country, - 13% of high school and 10% of middle school students report e-cigarette use - and the neighbor islands are suffering even more. Our schools are staggering under the burden of electronic tobacco devices. And yet, our counties are prohibited from enacting any tobacco control measures whatsoever. Previously this was not the case, and Kauai had great success in decreasing cigarette use among both teens and adults.

Please give our counties back the ability to address our local tobacco issues and protect our citizens, especially children, from the ravages of tobacco use. 82% of registered Hawaii voters support restoring county authority to regulate tobacco.

Linda Weiner, MD
Kauai

HB-1563

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 3:11:05 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shelby Wilson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I am a Hawai‘i resident writing in strong support of HB1563.

This measure would restore counties’ authority to regulate the sale of tobacco products and allow local communities to take meaningful action to protect public health—especially the health of our keiki. Honolulu, Hawai‘i County, and Maui County have already passed laws to end the sale of flavored tobacco products that disproportionately target youth, yet those protections cannot take effect without state action.

Local governments are best positioned to respond to the specific needs and realities of their communities. Restoring county authority honors that principle while supporting prevention-focused, evidence-based public health policy.

Please support HB1563 and allow counties to implement the protections their communities have already called for.

Mahalo nui for your consideration,

Shelby Wilson

Mother, teacher, and aloha ‘āina advocate

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair

Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair

Rep. Terez Amato (Maui)

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & HOMELESSNESS

Rep. Lisa Marten, Chair

Rep. Ikaika Olds, Vice Chair

Rep. Terez Amato (Maui)

HEARING:

Wednesday, February 4, 2026 at 9:00 AM

Conference Room 329 & Videoconference

Hawai'i State Capitol

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT : HB 1563 - COUNTY AUTHORITY TO REGULATE TOBACCO

Aloha Chair Takayama, Chair Marten, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair Olds, and Rep. Amato of Maui,

My name is Christine Andrews and I live in Wailuku, Maui. I write to you today in **support** of HB 1563 - County Authority to Regulate Tobacco. As the parent of two young adults, and as the landlord of a teacher at Baldwin High School in Wailuku, I understand the health risks posed to kids and teens by the sale of flavored tobacco products. Maui County has already passed laws to end the sale of flavored tobacco products that target kids and teens. Those laws cannot take effect unless the state restores county authority. HB1563 would make that possible and allow local communities to protect public health.

Mahalo nui for holding a hearing on this important subject. I request that you **support HB1563** and allow counties such as Maui to implement the laws we have passed to protect our communities.

Warmest aloha for the work you do to improve the lives of Hawai'i families.

Christine L. Andrews, J.D.

Wailuku, Maui

HB-1563

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 3:38:46 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jake J. Watkins	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We need to maintain state control so businesses can compete on a level playing field.

HB-1563

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 3:50:46 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amalia Olter	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I am writing in support of SB2679. Too many youth in Hawai'i are unable to access the mental health services they need. This bill helps meet young people where they are and reflects priorities raised directly by youth across our state. Please support SB2679 and invest in youth mental health.

Mahalo,

Amalia O

Date: February 1, 2026

To: The Honorable Gregg Takayama, Chair
The Honorable Sue L. Keohokapu-Loy, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Health

The Honorable Lisa Marten, Chair
The Honorable Ikaika Olds, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness

Re: **Support for HB1563**, Relating to Tobacco Products

Hrg: Wednesday February 4, 2026 at 9:00 am via Videoconference Conference Room 329

Aloha House Committees on Health and Human Services & Homelessness,

As a parent, community member and healthcare professional I am writing in **strong support of HB1563**, which repeals existing law that preempts local ordinances or regulations that regulate the sale of cigarettes, tobacco products, and electronic smoking devices, voids any existing local laws and regulations conflicting with the state law governing smoking, and, allows counties to adopt ordinances that regulate the sale of cigarettes, tobacco products, and electronic smoking devices that do not conflict with and are more stringent than the state law that governs smoking.

Hawai'i's counties have historically been national leaders in tobacco regulation. However, since 2018, the counties have been blocked from addressing emerging issues involving tobacco products, including the use and impact of flavored tobacco products on our keiki.

Flavored tobacco products, especially e-cigarettes, attract children and teens. 90% of current middle and high school students who use e-cigarettes are using flavored products.

HB1563 will allow laws ending the sale of flavored tobacco products, which have already been passed in Honolulu, Hawai'i and Maui counties, to take effect.

82% of registered Hawai'i voters support returning this authority to their counties.

I **strongly support HB1563**, respectfully ask you to pass it out of committee.

Many thanks for your consideration,

Forrest Batz, PharmD
Keaau, HI

HB-1563

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 12:17:01 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
An Vo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is An and I'm a college public health student on O'ahu. I'm testifying in support of HB1563 to restore county authority to regulate tobacco sales.

In high school, my classmates vaped in restrooms so often that I felt annoyed that the boys restroom was always closed but the girls restroom was open. Years later, I am concerned that my college peers vape secretly during or on school grounds, even during class.

Local communities know the problems that affect our public health. We need local governments to have the authority to regulate tobacco sales because local people know what solutions we need, and we need solutions now. I hope Hawai'i will be run by the local government and not be 100% restricted by the federal government.

I urge you to support bill HB1563 to restore county authority to regulate tobacco sales. Mahalo for caring about Hawai'i's keiki and kupuna.

Mahalo,

An

Honolulu

HB-1563

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 6:12:15 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leilani Kailiawa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, Chair, Vice Chair and committee members,

My name is Leilani Kailiawa. I am a parent and community leader.

I am writing in support of HB 1563 This bill would restore local control and allow counties to regulate tobacco sales to protect our keiki. My county has already acted to end the sale of flavored tobacco, but those protections cannot take effect without state action. Please support HB 1563 and allow counties to protect their communities.

This bill is important to me because I have 9 year old keiki that may be affected in the near future.

Mahalo nui loa for listening and allowing me to share my support of bill HB1563

Sincerely,

Leilani Kailiawa

HB-1563

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 8:43:06 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caroline Azelski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support of. Thank you.

HB-1563

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 8:54:05 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emma Waters	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of this bill. Honolulu, Hawaii, and Maui have already passed laws banning flavored tobacco products, which often hook young kids. County authority to regulate the sale of tobacco must be restored. Keiki and ohana over big tobacco, always. Mahalo.

HB-1563

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 9:28:12 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shelly Ogata	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and members of the Committee on Health and the Committee on Human Service & HHomelessness:

As a public health advocate, I am in strong support of HB1563 r/t tobacco products.82% of registered Hawai'i voters support restoring county authority with more local control and closer ties to the community.

Our keiki deserve clean air and a chance at life without the cloud of nicotine addiction. Please support our communities to bring local control back to our counties so we can protect our keiki and our 'āina.

Mahalo for your time and attention.

HB-1563

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 10:33:04 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jay Ihara	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha House Committee on Health,

Aloha House Committee on Health,

My name is Jay Ihara, and I strongly support HB1563. In January 2024, the Hawai'i County Council passed Bill 102, which prohibits the sale of flavored tobacco products. Many individuals testified in favor of this bill. In Hawai'i, over 13% of high school students and 10% of middle school students reported using e-cigarettes in 2023. Additionally, schools have reported that elementary students as young as third grade are using e-cigarettes. By restoring the county's authority to regulate the sale of flavored tobacco products, we can make it more difficult for youth to obtain e-cigarettes.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

HB-1563

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 10:41:25 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Valerie Smalley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Vice - Chair,

I am in strong support of HB1563 , restoring county authority to regulate tobacco products because:

- Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable deaths.
- 1,400 people die in Hawai‘i each year from tobacco use, cutting a decade off the average smoker’s life.
- Half of smokers die from tobacco-related disease.
- In Hawai‘i more than 13% of high schoolers and 10% of middle schoolers reported using e-cigarettes in 2023.
- 82% of registered Hawai‘i voters support restoring county authority.

Thank you Valerie Smalley

February 4, 2026

Testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of HB 1563, "Relating to Tobacco Products"

Aloha Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy and members of the House Committee on Health,

I am writing in strong support of HI 1563 which would amend a law passed during the waning days of the 2018 State Legislative Session through House Bill 1895, which underwent last minute changes and did not receive a public hearing or allow public comment, and amended an otherwise well-meaning and worthy bill to fund needed kidney dialysis centers in the state with a provision that harms public health and helps the tobacco industry. This last minute-added provision blocked (preempts) county governments in Hawaii from passing their own ordinances to reduce tobacco use, including measures addressing the sale of candy-flavored tobacco products and menthol cigarettes that attract kids.

Most of Hawaii's most effective tobacco-related laws that have contributed to reductions in youth and adult smoking rates began as ordinances passed by Hawaii's counties. Some of those ordinances, aimed at addressing local public health threats, proved their effectiveness at the county level for years before being replicated by state/and or federal laws.

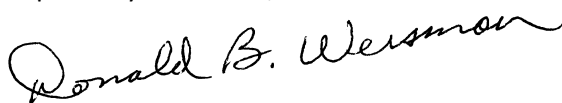
The tobacco industry for years, on the other hand, attempted to advance state legislation that would preempt local government's home rule on tobacco issues. In fact, former Governor John Waihee vetoed such a bill after it passed through the legislative process citing the need for county governments to be able to address important health issues that affect their communities. Tobacco, which remains the leading preventable cause of death in Hawaii, and which costs the state and its taxpayers over a half-billion dollars annually in healthcare costs, certainly qualifies as a public health threat deserving of both local and state policy attention.

Local governments should be able to determine their own needs for tobacco policies, and the state legislature should support those efforts by establishing a floor, not a ceiling, on what local governments can do to address those needs. Some 1,400 Hawaii residents die each year from tobacco use, and 21,000 kids alive today in Hawaii will die prematurely from tobacco use if nothing is done to reduce it.

HB 1563 would correct the last minute provision (which today would be deemed illegal if attempted following a state Supreme Court judgement declaring such legislative maneuvers unconstitutional) added to legislation in 2018 which provided the tobacco industry its long sought goal to funnel important, progressive tobacco-control policies only through the state legislative level. There it can focus its resources to defeat those measures, and away from the counties where the industry struggles to compete with community grassroots support for those issues.

I urge your strong support of HB 1563 and ask that you return county home rule on this most vital public health issue back to local communities.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donald B. Weisman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a horizontal line above the name.

Don Weisman
Kailua, HI

HB-1563

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 1:53:34 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gregory John	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Honorable Chair and members of the Health Committee

My name is Gregory John Cachero, and I am a senior at Radford High School. I am in strong support of Bill HB1563, which restores the county's authority to regulate tobacco sales.

For far too long, I have noticed the rapid increase of e-cigarette use among youth. What was once alarming has now become almost commonplace in our schools and communities. In Hawai'i alone, 1,400 people die each year from tobacco-related illnesses, and troubling trends show that 8 out of 10 youth who have tried a tobacco product began with a flavored one. These products are designed to appeal to young people, and their easy accessibility only fuels addiction.

This issue is personal to me. As I have friends who have vaped, and I have seen firsthand how nicotine addiction has negatively affected their health, focus, and social lives. What often starts as curiosity quickly turns into dependence, and many young people do not realize the long-term consequences until it is too late.

This bill is not about punishment, it is about prevention and protection. By restoring local authority to regulate tobacco sales. You have the opportunity to safeguard the health of Hawai'i's youth and future generations.

I respectfully urge you to support this bill.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Gregory John Cachero

12th Grade

Honolulu

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

My name is Nicole Moore, and I am a Hawai‘i resident writing in strong support of HB1563, which would restore local control over tobacco sales.

This bill is critical to protecting the health of our communities, especially our keiki. Counties understand their local needs best and should have the authority to enact tobacco regulations that reflect those realities. In my county, local leaders have already taken action to end the sale of flavored tobacco products—products that are widely known to appeal to youth—but these protections cannot take effect without state action to restore county authority.

I also support HB1563 because I have seen firsthand the harm that flavored tobacco and vaping products can cause. A close family member began using flavored vape products as a minor and was later diagnosed with bronchiolitis obliterans, commonly known as “popcorn lung.” This diagnosis has significantly affected his quality of life and has limited his employment opportunities. His ongoing healthcare needs, including medications and inhalers, likely exceed his ability to pay.

While I am not asserting that vaping or flavored tobacco products were the sole cause of his condition, they were a strong contributing factor. With recent volcanic activity and degraded air quality, his respiratory condition has worsened, resulting in emergency room visits and increased dependence on respiratory medications. These experiences underscore how vulnerable individuals—especially young people—can face lifelong consequences from early exposure to harmful products.

HB1563 respects local decision-making while advancing public health. Allowing counties to regulate tobacco sales empowers communities to reduce youth addiction, prevent long-term health harms, and avoid preventable healthcare costs borne by families and the public.

I urge you to support HB1563 and allow counties to protect their residents and future generations. Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your consideration.

Respectfully,
Nicole Moore
Hawai‘i

HB-1563

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 2:52:57 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephanie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Our families deserve the power to protect their keiki from the harms of tobacco. Yet current state law blocks our counties from acting, even as tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable death, taking 1,400 lives in Hawai‘i each year and cutting a decade off the average smoker’s life. Today, more than 13% of high schoolers and 10% of middle schoolers report using e-cigarettes, and we know half of all smokers will die from tobacco-related disease. Hawai‘i’s families overwhelmingly want change, with 82% of registered voters support restoring county authority. Please pass this bill so our counties can once again enact strong protections and help keep our keiki safe.

HB-1563

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 4:01:08 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michelle Robinson	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strongly opposed. There are ordinances such flavor bans that would put local vape shops out of business.

HB-1563

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 4:32:24 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sean Higa	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please keep control at the State level.

Chair - Representative Gregg Takayama
Vice Chair - Sue Keohokapu-Lee Loy
Members of the Committee on Health

I write this in full support of HB1563.

In my school or community, I have noticed that vaping has become a trend and is often treated like it's harmless. I have seen students vaping in the bathrooms, at parties, and sometimes even just discussing it among themselves. This has created a trend even though the trend is not healthy or positive. Another thing is how easily youth can access a disposable vape.

Flavored tobacco products stand out to youth because of their lack of taste and appearance compared to plain/regular tobacco. Flavors and designs make teens think that products are fun, safe, and not addictive. However, it misleads teens into believing that it is safe without a full understanding of health risks and addictiveness.

I have seen how vaping affects my peers by increasing their stress, addiction, and distractions while in school. Some find it difficult to get through the day without having to vape, and both the curiosity and the addiction to vape have life-altering consequences.

One experience that showed me how serious this issue is was when I saw how casual vaping has become among students my age. I've seen peers rely on e-cigarettes to get through the school day, hitting them between classes or during breaks. What really stood out was when I was in 8th grade, just trying to go to the bathroom when school started and seeing 3 girls vaping. They saw me and said "You won't tell right?" and since I was new to the school and scared so I just nodded my head. They proceed to ask if I want a hit, I say no and leave. From then on I had seen that people vaping in the bathrooms was a common recurrence. Because of a vape, I couldn't even use the bathroom in peace and this is just in middle school.

Vaping causes problems for young people such as increased stress, dependence on nicotine, and difficulty focusing in school. I've also seen how it creates pressure for others to vape just to fit, even when they have no urge to do so. It changes the whole school environment and makes those unhealthy behaviors feel normal.

Local governments should have the authority to regulate tobacco sales because only the local government can truly reflect the needs of the people. The local government knows the people it serves best, especially the youth. In fact, the local government is the closest to the people it serves, and it is the very body that should be able to address the rapid rise of the youth's use of

vape products. By depriving the local government of the said regulatory power, the local government cannot serve the youth well.

In Hawai'i, three out of four countries have voted in favor of our bans, demonstrating public support for preventing youth from flavored tobacco products. They are the voice of our communities, health experts, and our young people who see firsthand how flavors attract and hook youth. The fact that most countries have acted shows that this is not a controversial issue- it is a shared priority.

I hope you will consider stronger laws that safeguard our youth against nicotine addiction. Please restore power to regulate tobacco sales to country governments and banning sales of those little electronic cigarettes. Stiffer country laws are necessary to prevent our children from being marketed with harmful tobacco products.

I hope future keiki won't have to deal with the pressures of vaping in school or dealing with health hazards of a nicotine high in general. I hope that no child feels as though vaping is just another necessity of being young and growing up.

I hope Hawai'i can be a safer place for kids by prioritizing youth health and restricting access to flavored and disposable tobacco products that are targeting our youth and trying to lure them into nicotine addiction and disease. Lawmakers are now presenting an opportunity to build a healthier school environment, community, and future for our youth.

Lily
Kapolei

Chair Gregg Takayama, Vice Chair Sue Lee-Loy, and Members of the Committee on Health,

I am writing in full support of HB1563.

In my school, I have witnessed peers fall unconscious due to the impacts of tobacco. I have witnessed multiple ambulances, police, and emergency responders rush to the gates of my school; causing panic and uncertainty. Not only is tobacco harmful for youth during immediate usage, but impacts the rest of their lives.

This issue matters to me personally because I have lost a family member to tobacco when I was younger. I remember sitting on the carpet with my younger cousin as we got told the obstructing news. Ever since that moment, I swore to myself that I would never put a finger on a tobacco product. To know that 2.25 million U.S. middle and high school students reported use of a tobacco product in 2024 worries me about the impact tobacco businesses grasp on the future generation.

In Hawai'i, three out of four counties have already passed flavor bans, which proves the urgency and reality of this tobacco epidemic.

I hope our future generations can live a full life without the disruptance or temptations of the tobacco industry. I believe our keiki should not be profited off of, but safeguarded through strong public health policies, education, and community-driven prevention efforts. Please pass HB1563.

Mia
Honolulu

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Roxan. I am a high school student from the Big Island, and I am here in support of HB1563 to restore county authority to regulate tobacco sales.

What urged me to speak today was something my sister told me about a coworker who couldn't get through a single shift without his vape. One day, he forgot it and asked his mom to drive from his house back to his workplace, just to bring it to him. When she told me this, his situation stayed with me. Not because it was perplexing, but because it felt normal.

The way we've validated this dependency worries me. We youth grow up watching adults rely on these products, and after a while it just feels like a part of everyday life. Kids in bathrooms 24/7 and asking other students if they carry a vape. These products are not harmless, they're already causing harm. In Hawai'i, about 1,400 people die each year from tobacco-related causes. They're sold as a safer alternative to tobacco, but they hook just as fast, and leave behind waste. Right in front of us, we can see the harm in schools, workplaces, and everywhere we go. Time is not the issue, children's lives are. Restoring county authority would let us stop this before more harm is perceived as normal.

As a student from Hilo, this step is necessary for the health of our keiki, our kupuna, and ourselves.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Mahalo.

Roxan Gel

Hilo

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in full support of HB1563.

My name is Brielle and I live on the Island of O'ahu. I am concerned about youth vaping because it will only get worse from what is happening in my community unless we act to stop vaping. It makes me worried about the health of youth and the environment that it affects. One example I can share is that, when I was at a store, I saw a younger girl (high school) buying a vape and got the most colorful vape. This is bad because the color and flavors attract our youth. Your support matters to students like me because you can make a difference to stop the issue. I hope you will consider stronger laws that prevent any form of vaping and cigarettes. I hope Hawai'i can be a safer place for kids. Mahalo for listening to my testimony.

Brielle

Grade 8

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Mao and I am a middle school student on O'ahu. I am writing in full support of HB1563.

I am concerned about youth vaping because I heard that vaping is very addicting and can result in a very high risk of diseases like cancer and even deaths. Vaping is way more addictive than tobacco and has many dangerous chemicals that get you a higher chance of cancer. One example I can share is from my friend in high school. Since students vape in school bathrooms, other students don't want to use it because they are scared of getting bullied by seeing the people vape. This results in students having to wait to use the bathroom until they get home. Helping to stop youth vaping would make our community healthier because it solves many problems. For example, there are many physical and mental problems from vaping, so stopping vapes could get people to maintain a healthy body. Stopping vapes could reduce pollution too.

I hope that you will consider making tobacco/vaping laws stricter for kids to have a safer place to live. Thank you so much for caring about Hawai'i's youth.

Mao

Grade 8

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in full support of HB1563.

I am Airi and I am a middle schooler on O'ahu island. I am really concerned about youth vaping because it is very addicting and can affect our health really badly. Even if the student is not the smoker, inhaling the smoke can damage your health really bad. A time I realized vaping was a serious issue was when I heard about kids smoking at my school. My friends told me there was a kid smoking in the restroom. I never thought middle schoolers would vape, especially at school! Your support matters a lot because tobacco can crash that person's life. Once they touch tobacco, they will get addicted and can't go back to their healthy body.

I hope you will consider making the laws stronger so future students will have a bright healthy life. Thank you so much for caring about Hawai'i's youth.

Airi

Grade 8

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in full support of HB1563.

My name is Elena and I live on the island of O'ahu. It makes me worried when I see all the problems vaping causes, especially in teens. When teens start vaping, they get addicted and eventually get hurt because of it. A time I realized vaping was a serious issue was when I was driving through the city and I saw vape shops with teens sitting outside, holding vapes in their hands. Your support matters to students like me because we know that vaping harms people, but some students don't know that. With your help, we could inform more teens about the side effects of vaping. I hope future students won't have to deal with seeing or hearing about their classmates vaping. Thank you for caring about Hawai'i's youth

Elena

Grade 7

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in full support of HB1563.

My name is Catherine and I'm concerned about youth vaping because it can cause major problems to the bodies of those who vape. The lungs, heart, and even the brain can be damaged. This can cause life-threatening changes and even death. But even though I don't vape, it still affects me because the loss of thousands of lives from just vaping is something I don't want to keep happening. Your support matters to students like me because being able to help stop this huge problem can benefit us even more by saving lives. I hope you will consider stronger laws that are able to protect younger kids from vaping more successfully in the future. Mahalo for listening to my testimony.

Catherine

Grade 7

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in full support of HB1563.

My name is 'Aukai and I'm in 7th grade. In my school and community, I've noticed that a lot of people vape around the community. At school, people vape in the bathroom so they won't get caught. Even if I don't vape, it still affects me because vaping can cause deaths, illnesses, and people and teens can become addicted to them over time. Your support matters to students like me because we can stop illnesses and deaths happening around the world and stop teens from vaping. I hope Hawai'i can be a safer place for kids by stopping and getting rid of cigarettes so we can stop the addiction of vapes. If we can stop this, we can stop deaths, illnesses, and lung damage.

Mahalo for listening to my testimony.

'Aukai
Grade 7

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in full support of HB1563.

My name is Evan and I'm in 8th grade on the island of O'ahu. It makes me worried when there's youth on my island who are exposed to harsh vape chemicals that will affect their lives because there are companies who are targeting this audience group for money. A time when I realized vaping was a serious issue was when there were relatives of mine who couldn't last a simple 20 minutes without it. I believe you can help by taking action to become more strict on who can access vapes. I hope the outcome will lower the tobacco rates in all schools on O'ahu. Thank you for caring about Hawai'i's youth.

Evan

Grade 8

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in full support of HB1563.

My name is Paul and I am concerned about youth vaping. My reason for this is because my mom vapes and people at our school also vape. I'm speaking up for the kids that get addicted. Vaping within youth could be stopped because of their health and sports / people of sports teams are affected because their lungs are affected because of it. Also they can ruin their chances of having a good life.

Paul

Grade 7

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in full support of HB1563.

My name is Kellan and I'm in 8th grade. I am concerned about youth vaping because it isn't good for them. One example I can share is my friend that I used to skate with had become addicted to vapes. It was a problem because he couldn't go 5 minutes without it. He also couldn't breathe when he got injured. I hope you will consider stronger laws that will stop youth vaping. Mahalo for listening to my testimony.

Kellan

Grade 8

HB-1563

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 4:55:19 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bryan Mih	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Bryan Mih and I am a parent, pediatrician, and the medical director of the Kapi'olani Smokefree Families Program. For the health of our keiki and their families, I strongly support this measure. E-cigarettes or "vapes" are addicting increasing numbers of keiki to nicotine. The ability of each county to introduce new rules has a proven track record of improving the health of our population. These include increasing the age to purchase tobacco products to 21 years old, clean air laws, and smoke-free cars while keiki are present.

Nicotine is a highly addictive drug that impacts the adolescent brain, reducing impulse control and affecting mood. Once young people are addicted to nicotine, it is extremely difficult to quit. 90% of current middle and high school students that use e-cigarettes are using flavored e-cigarettes.

By allowing counties to enact stricter tobacco and nicotine control regulations than those found at the state level, we can more effectively protect the health of our keiki and their families. There is nothing more important than the health of our young people.

Please support this important bill. Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Bryan Mih, MD MPH FAAP

Pediatrician

Medical Director, Kapi'olani Smokefree Families

HB-1563

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 6:09:56 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cyd L. Hoffeld	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Rep. Gregg Takayama, Vice Chair Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Cyd Hoffeld, and I am writing to express my **strong support for HB1563**.

This bill represents a vital step in returning "home rule" to our county lawmakers. Restoring this authority allows our local leaders to address urgent public health issues—specifically the regulation of tobacco and nicotine products—with the speed and precision our unique communities require.

We have already seen incredible leadership on this front. Driven by the passion of our youth, educators, and healthcare providers, the Mayors of Honolulu, Hawai‘i, and Maui Counties have already passed ordinances to ban the sale of flavored tobacco products, including menthol. These measures directly protect our keiki from products designed to target them. However, these life-saving local laws are currently on hold; they will only take effect once **HB1563** passes.

Please empower our counties to do the good work they were vested to do. By **supporting HB1563**, you are supporting the health of our keiki and the dedicated efforts of our community stakeholders.

Mahalo for your time and for your strong support of this measure.

Sincerely,

Cyd Hoffeld

HB-1563

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 6:11:59 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Beth Anderson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support Bill HB 1563 because more stringent measures are needed to protect kids and teens from these addictive tobacco products. Addiction to these products can lead to serious lifelong health issues and death. Once addicted to tobacco products, it is very difficult to stop using them. These products are expensive and unhealthy and there is no logical or positive reason for youth to be using these products.

Many of the flavorings used in these products are toxic and really bad for your health. 9 out of 10 who have tried a tobacco product start with flavored products. Banning flavored tobacco products lead to a decrease in youth tobacco use and initiation.

Comprehensive bans on tobacco products have been successful in reducing smoking rates and saving lives and preventing health problems related to smoking.

I hope you will value the youth in our state and help deter access to flavored addictive tobacco products that are can seriously effect their lifelong health status.

Thank you for supporting HB 1563

HB-1563

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 8:21:31 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Aisley Dela Rosa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I am a Hawai'i resident writing in support of HB1563. This bill would restore local control and allow counties to regulate tobacco sales to protect our keiki. My county has already acted to end the sale of flavored tobacco, but those protections cannot take effect without state action. Please support HB1563 and allow counties to protect their communities.

Mahalo,
Aisley Dela Rosa

HB-1563

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 9:37:56 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maya Maxym	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

- Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable deaths.
- 1,400 people die in Hawai‘i each year from tobacco use, cutting a decade off the average smoker’s life.
- Half of smokers die from tobacco-related disease.
- In Hawai‘i more than 13% of high schoolers and 10% of middle schoolers reported using e-cigarettes in 2023.
- 82% of registered Hawai‘i voters support restoring county authority.

HB-1563

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 7:43:12 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anamalia Su'esu'e	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I am a Hawai'i resident writing in support of HB1563. As a parent, I want to protect my children from the harmful and addictive effects of tobacco, especially products that are designed to appeal to youth. This bill would restore local control and allow counties to regulate tobacco sales to protect our keiki. My county has already acted to end the sale of flavored tobacco, but those protections cannot take effect without state action. Please support HB1563 and allow counties to protect their communities.

Mahalo,
Anamalia
Volcano, 96785

I inadvertently submitted the wrong testimony for HB1563 being heard tomorrow 2/4 by the Health Committee. Here is the correct testimony:

I strongly support HB1563 which would restore the counties authority to regulate tobacco products. 3 counties have already passed laws more restrictive than the state to help protect their communities and 82% of registered Hawai'i voters support restoring county authority but they need the state to restore their ability so these can go into effect.

The only real opposition is from those that profit off of selling these highly addictive products, many of which end up in the hands of the most vulnerable of our community, negatively impacting their health and costing the State millions a year in tobacco related costs, not to mention 1,400 preventable deaths in Hawaii.

Thank you for your continued support on this important issue.

Scott Stensrud

Kapolei

LATE

Luke Itomura

February 4, 2026

House Committee on Health

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB1563

Aloha,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **strong support of**

HB1563. I am Luke Itomura, and I am a high school student. I am testifying to express my strong support for HB1563. Today, I stand alongside numerous Hawaii youth united against the alarming youth-flavored vaping epidemic that threatens our health and future. We collectively believe that passing this legislation is an essential step in protecting the health and future of the youth.

At just 13 years old, I was offered a flavored vape by another youth for the first time. This youth smoker used many tactics to peer pressure me into trying it. Their main tactic was telling me it was a delicious Hawaiian Sun flavor; a local favorite. At that moment, I realized how easy it is to fall for the appeal of flavored vapes. My friends in the sixth grade had also mentioned that they were offered flavored vapes. For people as young as twelve, flavors like watermelon or Jolly Rancher are an enticing death trap. What starts as innocent curiosity can turn into a lifelong addiction filled with lung cancer, strokes, heart disease, and countless other diseases. There is no other product on the market that kills up to 50% of its users who don't quit ([WHO](#)).

Advocates have worked to pass bills that end the sale of flavored tobacco in the City and County of Honolulu, the County of Hawai'i, and the County of Maui. The counties have given the state a clear message to protect our keiki and restore their authority to regulate tobacco sales by passing HB1563. Past precedent proves that **bills that end the sale of flavored tobacco are effective.** A study published in JAMA Network evaluating statewide restrictions on flavored e-cigarette sales in the US from 2014 to 2020 found that statewide restrictions were associated with reductions of 25.01% to 31.26% in total e-cigarette unit sales compared to states without restrictions ([Ali et al. 2022](#)). Thus, it is clear that similar results will yield from the passage of HB1563, protecting our innocent keiki from Big Tobacco

Many opposers bring up the argument that Hawaii would lose tax revenue by banning flavored tobacco products. However, the full picture must be taken into account. The reality is



Photo of Collected Vapes from Schools Across Hawaii

that while the state would likely see a reduction of tax revenue in the short term, **long-term cost savings would be substantial**. A report by the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids ([CTFK](#)) found the following:

Annual healthcare costs in Hawaii directly caused by smoking	\$611 million
Medicaid costs caused by smoking in Hawaii	\$152.3 million
Residents' state & federal tax burden from smoking-caused government expenditures	\$955 per household
Smoking-caused productivity losses in Hawaii (from smoking-caused premature death and illness that prevent people from working)	\$1.1 billion

By passing HB1563, Hawaii can reduce these costs, thereby saving more in the long run. A study by Stanford University shows that Hawaii can expect these savings: it found that prohibiting flavored tobacco leads to savings in healthcare expenses and increased labor productivity ([Proctor 2013](#)). **84% of Hawaii registered voters support ending the sale of flavored tobacco products**, justifying that this is a highly wanted policy ([Ward Research](#)).

Flavored tobacco has no place in the hands of the youth. Passing HB1563 is the first step in securing a tobacco-free future.

Thank you for your time.

Mahalo,

Luke Itomura

LATE

HB-1563

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 10:23:08 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathy Kim	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The legislature did the righjt thing already in 2018 and is best able to deal with these issues.
Strongly Opposed to this bill.

HB-1563

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 12:57:11 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brian Santiago	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strongly Oppose HB1563

Let's maintain State control and a level playing field for each county. Thank You.

Sincerely,

Brian Santiago

LATE

HB-1563

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 2:34:55 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sabrina Spencer	Individual	Oppose	In Person

Comments:

HB1563 bill will cause hardships for businesses when the ordinances on the books ban all the flavored products. The legislature promised us that control should be at the State level with previous legislation and we depend on that promise.

Thank You - Stay Maui Strong

LATE

HB-1563

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 8:59:21 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ricardo Molero Bravo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair, Vice-Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I support **HB1563**, which repeals the state preemption of local tobacco and electronic smoking device regulations and restores county authority to adopt stronger public-health protections than state law. This bill empowers counties to address the dramatic rise in youth nicotine use by allowing local governments to enact evidence-based restrictions tailored to their communities. By clarifying local authority, HB1563 helps protect keiki from the harms of tobacco and vaping products and supports broader public-health goals.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

HB-1563

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 9:06:03 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ka'ale'a Kyrstin Hanawahine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I am a Hawai'i resident writing in support of HB1563. This bill would restore local control and allow counties to regulate tobacco sales to protect our keiki. My county has already acted to end the sale of flavored tobacco, but those protections cannot take effect without state action. Please support HB1563 and allow counties to protect their communities.

Mahalo,
Ka'ale'a Hanawahine

HB-1563

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 11:21:33 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sara Harris	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Sara Harris and I am an OBGYN on Oahu. I am writing in **strong support of HB1563**.

HB1563 recognizes that counties play a critical role in protecting public health. By repealing state preemption and allowing counties to adopt more stringent regulations on the sale of cigarettes, tobacco products, and electronic smoking devices, this bill enables local governments to respond to the specific needs of their communities. From a medical standpoint, the ability to implement stronger local protections is essential—particularly as patterns of youth nicotine use and product availability vary across counties.

Electronic smoking devices have introduced new challenges in clinical care. Many patients, especially young people, underestimate the risks of these products, yet develop nicotine addiction. Local policies that reduce access, availability, and normalization of these products are proven tools in preventing initiation and supporting cessation.

As a healthcare provider, I see firsthand that the burden of tobacco-related disease is not evenly distributed. Communities already experiencing health disparities often face higher exposure and fewer resources. Allowing counties to enact more protective regulations supports health equity and aligns with evidence-based public health practice.

Thank you for your consideration!

Sara C Harris, MD