



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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**Testimony in OPPOSITION to H.B. 1532
RELATING TO TAXATION**

REPRESENTATIVE GREGG TAKAYAMA, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Hearing Date: February 6, 2026, 9:00 AM

Room Number: Conference Room 329
and Videoconference

1 **Fiscal Implications:** The Department of Health (DOH) defers to the Department of Taxation
2 regarding any fiscal implications of a large cigar and pipe tobacco exemption to the unlawful
3 shipment provision of §245-16.5 Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS).

4 **Department Position:** The DOH opposes this measure.

5 **Department Testimony:** The DOH respectfully opposes House Bill 1532 (H.B. 1532) which
6 proposes to amend §245-16.5, HRS by exempting large cigars and pipe tobacco sold through
7 the internet from shipping restrictions to consumers in the State, provided that all the
8 applicable state taxes on the products are paid and that it is shipped to a person 21 years or
9 older for personal consumption and not for resale or distribution.

10 There is no public health justification for exempting cigars or pipe tobacco from
11 regulations designed to reduce the burden of tobacco use in Hawaii. Cigar smoking is not a safe
12 alternative to cigarette smoking.^{1,2} Cigar smoke contains the same toxic substances as cigarette

¹ National Cancer Institute. [Cigars: Health Effects and Trends. Smoking and Tobacco Control Monograph No. 9](#). Smoking and Tobacco Control Monograph No. 9. Bethesda (MD): National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute, 1998 [accessed 2015 Oct 19].

² Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. The Rise of Cigars and Cigar-Smoking Harms. January 3, 2024. Retrieved from <https://assets.tobaccofreekids.org/factsheets/0333.pdf>

1 smoke³ and is strongly associated with certain cancers including oral, esophageal, laryngeal,
2 and lung cancers and the risk for head and neck and esophageal cancer increases when
3 combined with alcohol.^{4,5,6} The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine
4 Committee studying the health effects of premium cigars also finds evidence is growing
5 associating cigars with pancreatic cancer. Researchers at the U.S Food and Drug Administration
6 Center for Tobacco Products published a study in 2019 stating that nearly 200,000
7 cardiovascular conditions and cancer cases were attributable to former exclusive cigar smoking
8 among U.S. adults aged 35 years and older.⁷ A large cigar may contain as much tobacco as a
9 whole pack of cigarettes.⁸

10 Among middle and high schoolers in 2024, cigars were the fourth most used tobacco
11 product.⁹ The ways in which mass media and cigar marketing strategies connect and emphasize
12 tobacco use with social status and influence can make young people want to try these
13 products.¹⁰ A study conducted by Rutgers Center for Tobacco Studies found that most premium
14 or traditional cigar users in the U.S. were male, white, and aged 25-45 years.¹¹ A large

³ *Harmful Chemicals in Tobacco Products*. (n.d.). Retrieved February 8, 2024, from <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/tobacco/carcinogens-found-in-tobacco-products.html>

⁴ The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine; Health and Medicine Division; Board on Population Health and Public Health Practice; Committee on Patterns of Use and Health Effects of "Premium Cigars" and Priority Research; Mead AM, Geller AB, Teutsch SM, editors. *Premium Cigars: Patterns of Use, Marketing, and Health Effects*. Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US); 2022 Mar 10. 5, Health Effects of Premium Cigars. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK586217/>

⁵ National Cancer Institute. *Cigars: Health Effects and Trends. Smoking and Tobacco Control Monograph No. 9*. Smoking and Tobacco Control Monograph No. 9. Bethesda (MD): National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute, 1998 [accessed 2015 Oct 19].

⁶ American Cancer Society. *Cigar Smoking*. Atlanta: American Cancer Society [cited 2015 Oct 19].

⁷ Rostron, B. L., Corey, C. G., & Gindi, R. M. (2019). Cigar smoking prevalence and morbidity among US adults, 2000–2015. *Preventive Medicine Reports*, 14, 100821. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pmedr.2019.100821>

⁸ Baker, F., S.Ainsworth, J.T. Dye, et al., *Health Risks Associated with Cigar Smoking*, *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 284(6):735-740, 2000.

⁹ Jamal, A. (2024). Tobacco Product Use Among Middle and High School Students—National Youth Tobacco Survey, United States, 2024. *MMWR. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 73. <https://doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm7341a2>
10 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2023, November 2). Youth and tobacco use. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/youth_data/tobacco_use/index.htm

¹¹ Ganz, O., Villanti, A. C., Young, W. J., Mays, D., Bover Manderski, M. T., & Delnevo, C. D. (2023). Estimating Prevalence of Premium or Traditional Cigar Use and User Characteristics Based on Varying Definitions of Use. *Nicotine & Tobacco Research*, 25(Suppl 1), S33–S38. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ntr/ntad011>

1 proportion of these cigar users also reported perceiving that premium cigars are less harmful
2 compared with cigarettes.¹²

3 There are no safe tobacco products,¹³ and there is no safe level of exposure to tobacco
4 smoke.^{14,15,16} Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death and disease in the U.S.,¹⁷
5 claiming 1,400 lives in Hawaii each year,¹⁸ and exacting an excess of \$611 million in annual
6 medical costs directly attributable to smoking.¹⁹ Cigar smoking has many of the same negative
7 health consequences as cigarettes, leading to 9,000 premature deaths a year in the U.S.²⁰

8 The DOH respectfully opposes H.B. 1532 and any exemptions for large cigars or pipe
9 tobacco from regulations designed to reduce the burden of tobacco use in Hawaii.

10 **Offered Amendments:** None

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

¹² Ganz, O., Villanti, A. C., Young, W. J., Mays, D., Bover Manderski, M. T., & Delnevo, C. D. (2023). Estimating Prevalence of Premium or Traditional Cigar Use and User Characteristics Based on Varying Definitions of Use. *Nicotine & Tobacco Research*, 25(Suppl 1), S33–S38. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ntr/ntad011>

¹³ *Is Any Type of Tobacco Product Safe?* (n.d.). Retrieved February 8, 2024, from <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/tobacco/is-any-type-of-smoking-safe.html>

¹⁴ US Department of Health and Human Services. [The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress: A Report of the Surgeon General](#). Atlanta, GA: US Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health; 2014.

¹⁵ US Department of Health and Human Services. [The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General](#). Atlanta, GA: US Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health; 2006.

¹⁶ US Department of Health and Human Services. [A Report of the Surgeon General: How Tobacco Smoke Causes Disease: What It Means to You](#). Atlanta, GA: US Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health; 2010.

¹⁷ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. [The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress: A Report of the Surgeon General](#). Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2014 [accessed 2017 Apr 20].

¹⁸ Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. The Toll of Tobacco in Hawaii. December 2025. Accessed <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-us/hawaii>

¹⁹ Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. The Toll of Tobacco in Hawaii. December 2025. Accessed <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-us/hawaii>

²⁰ Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. (2025, August 14). *The Rise of Cigars and Cigar-Smoking Harms* [Fact Sheet]. Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. <https://assets.tobaccofreekids.org/factsheets/0333.pdf>

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair

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

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & HOMELESSNESS

Rep. Lisa Marten, Chair

Rep. Ikaika Olds, Vice Chair

Friday, February 6, 2026

9:00 AM – Room 329

Testimony In Opposition of House Bill 1532 Relating to Tobacco Products

The American Lung Association in Hawai'i strongly opposes HB 1532, which seeks to exempt the direct sale and shipment of large cigars and pipe tobacco from the offense of unlawful shipment of tobacco products. The American Lung Association is the leading organization working to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease through education, advocacy, and research. Our mission is to protect the health of all Hawai'i residents, and we believe that HB 1532 creates a dangerous loophole in our state's tobacco control laws.

We urge the committee to hold this bill based on the following concerns:

1. **Cigars are Tobacco Products: No Public Health Basis for Exemption**

There is no medical or public health justification for treating cigars differently than other tobacco products. All tobacco products, regardless of size, shape, or method of delivery, pose significant health risks. By creating an exemption for large cigars, the state sends a confusing and scientifically inaccurate message that these products are "safer" or somehow distinct from the broader tobacco epidemic. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has consistently maintained that all cigars—including "premium" or large cigars—pose a risk to public health, and no cigar can be considered safe¹.

2. **A "Slippery Slope" Toward Deregulation**

The enactment of Act 62 in 2023 was a landmark achievement in protecting Hawai'i's youth from the shipment of unregulated tobacco and nicotine products. HB 1532 represents a significant step backward. Allowing an exemption for one class of tobacco products sets a dangerous precedent. If large cigars are exempted today, there is little to prevent the tobacco industry from seeking similar loopholes for other flavored or high-nicotine products tomorrow. Strengthening our tobacco laws requires consistency, not a patchwork of exemptions that the industry can exploit.

3. **Severe Health Consequences of Cigar Smoking**

Cigar smoking is not a safe alternative to cigarettes. Scientific evidence confirms that cigar smoking causes many of the same devastating health outcomes as cigarette smoking, including:

Cancer: Cigar smoke contains many of the same carcinogens as cigarette smoke. It is a proven cause of cancers of the lung, oral cavity, larynx, and esophagus².

Heart Disease: Regular cigar smokers are at an increased risk for coronary heart disease and aortic aneurysms. **COPD:** Cigar smoking is a known cause of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), leading to permanent lung damage and decreased lung function³.

4. High Concentrations of Toxins and Nicotine

It is a common misconception that cigars are less harmful because smoke is not always deeply inhaled. In reality, large cigars can contain as much tobacco as an entire pack of cigarettes. Furthermore, a single large cigar can contain 100 to 200 milligrams of nicotine, compared to about 8 milligrams in a single cigarette. Because cigars burn for a longer period, they can produce higher levels of secondhand smoke, including higher concentrations of nitrogen oxides, ammonia, carbon monoxide, and tar⁴.

HB 1532 undermines Hawai'i's comprehensive efforts to reduce tobacco use and protect our communities from the high costs of nicotine addiction. We must prioritize the health of Hawai'i's residents over the convenience of shipping tobacco products.

The American Lung Association in Hawai'i respectfully requests that you defer HB 1532.

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

Citations:

1. U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). (2022). "Cigars, Cigarillos, and Little Cigars."
2. National Cancer Institute (NCI). (2023). "Cigar Smoking and Cancer." Cancer Facts.
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2024). "Health Effects of Cigar Smoking."
4. American Cancer Society. (2022). "Health Risks of Smoking Cigars."



To: Representative Gregg Takayama and Representative Lisa Marten, Chairs
Representatives Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Olds, Vice Chairs
Members of Health Committee and Human Services and Homelessness Committee

Hrg: Friday, February 6 @9am, Room 329

Re: **Testimony in STRONG OPPOSITION to HB 1532, “Relating to Taxation”**

By: Valerie Chang, JD, Executive Director
Hawaii COPD Coalition, www.hawaiicopd.org
P O Box 240053, Honolulu, Hawaii 96824
(808)699-9839
copd.hawaii@yahoo.com

I thank you for this opportunity in **STRONG OPPOSITION to HB1532**, which would exclude from the offense of unlawful shipment of tobacco products the direct sale of large cigars and pipe tobacco to adult consumers for personal use. This topic is very important to our organization, as we help those who suffer the awful ravages of long-term exposure to tobacco, those with emphysema and chronic bronchitis. I oppose this measure because it is so dangerous for our State. Our State will lose tax revenue and more people will use tobacco products, increasing preventable diseases including cancers, gum disease, and cardiovascular conditions.

My name is Valerie Chang. I am Executive Director of the Hawaii COPD Coalition. Our organization provides services and support to Hawaii's people affected by Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, more commonly known as emphysema and chronic bronchitis. COPD is now the third leading cause of death in the US and second leading cause of disability. Over 45,000 people in Hawaii have already been diagnosed with COPD and it is estimated that at least 45,000 more people may suffer from COPD but remain undiagnosed. Many of these COPD patients were seduced by tobacco when they were very young and unable to quit the addiction for decades, causing irreparable harm. There are over \$55 million in COPD hospital charges in Hawaii each year.

Your Committees are well aware of the substantial health risks from cigars. One large cigar can contain as much tobacco as an ENTIRE pack of cigarettes, with all the attendant harm. Cigars are tobacco as well as addictive nicotine, and dangerous to the health of Hawaii's people. Cigar smokers often inhale and absorb nicotine through their lungs as quickly as cigarette smokers. Nicotine is also absorbed in the lining of the mouth for those who inhale as well as those who don't inhale. Allowing exemptions is a slippery slope and will likely open the door for more exemptions.

Cigars are NOT a safer alternative to cigarettes. As mentioned above, they contain the same cancer-causing substances as cigarettes and other tobacco products. Cigar smoking increases the risk of cancers, lung and heart disease and many other health problems. Like all other tobacco products, cigars should continue to be subject to appropriately high taxation to reduce the deadly and costly burden of tobacco use. Tobacco and nicotine products are **still** the leading cause of preventable disease.

Thanks for the opportunity to testify about this issue that is so vital to the health of Hawaii and our nation. This issue is very important to our state and our Hawaii COPD Coalition is very glad that this committee has taken a leadership role in addressing this important matter. **Please defer HB1532 and do not pass this bill.** Thank you.



HIPHI Board

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Health*

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 4, 2026

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

RE: Opposition to HB 1532, Relating to Taxation

Hrg: Friday, February 6, 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 **Opposition to HB 1532**, which excludes from the offense of unlawful shipment of tobacco products the direct sale of large cigars and pipe tobacco to adult consumers for personal use.

Cigar smoking harms health.

According to the National Cancer Institute and the U.S. Surgeon General, cigar smoking causes oral cavity cancers (cancers of the lip, tongue, mouth, and throat), and cancers of the larynx, esophagus and lung, heart disease, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Cigar smoke contains the same toxins as cigarette smoke, and many new cigar products are more easily smoked and inhaled, just like cigarettes.

Changing the law promotes loopholes.

The Coalition worked diligently for over ten years to close the loophole of online tobacco sales. Online age verification systems are easily circumvented, and age verification upon delivery is difficult to enforce, creating opportunities for youth access. Tobacco companies are notorious for exploiting loopholes and modifying products to continue targeting youth markets in appealing ways.²

Cigars today are no longer just smoked by older men. Instead, the cigar market consists of products that vary widely in shape, flavors, and prices, making them appealing to a broader audience, including kids. Exempting large cigars from online sales makes these products more accessible to youth.

Negatively impacts youth.

Young people model adult behaviors, and more kids are learning to smoke cigars. Cigars are less regulated than cigarettes and are able to use kid-friendly flavors that attract youth to their product and increasing access to online purchasing will make it easier and more appealing for teens to buy and smoke these products.



Flavored tobacco use continues to be a significant public health concern in the U.S., particularly among groups such as youth and racial minorities. Two of the products that are most used in flavored form, especially among young people, are electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) and cigars.³ Exempting any tobacco product sends the wrong public health message. Hawai'i once led the way in tobacco control, and this bill is a step backwards for the health of our state.

We respectfully ask you to oppose HB 1532.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin Ramirez". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

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 Rostron, B. L., Cheng, Y. C., Gardner, L. D., & Ambrose, B. K. (2020). Prevalence and Reasons for Use of Flavored Cigars and ENDS among US Youth and Adults: Estimates from Wave 4 of the PATH Study, 2016-2017. *American Journal of Health Behavior*, 44(1), 76-81. <https://doi.org/10.5993/AJHB.44.1.8>

3 Talk about a scoop: Tobacco company puts Kitty Litter in its cigars. Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. (n.d.). https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/press-releases/2013_03_01_kittylitter



House Committee on Health
Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair
Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair

House Committee on Human Services and Homelessness
Rep. Lisa Marten, Chair
Rep. Ikaika Olds, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: Friday, February 6, 2026

ACS CAN OPPOSES HB1532: RELATING TO TAXATION.

Cynthia Au, Government Relations Director – Hawaii Guam
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

Thank you for the opportunity to **OPPOSE** on **HB1532: RELATING TO TAXATION.** The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) is the nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society. We support fact-based policy and legislative solutions designed to eliminate cancer as a major health problem. We support all efforts to invest in comprehensive policies that would strengthen the health infrastructure in Hawaii to prevent youth from starting to use tobacco and help adults already addicted to tobacco to quit.

ACS CAN opposes tobacco products being shipped directly to consumers. All tobacco products and all tobacco retailers should be regulated in the same manner. By exempting cigar shipments, this expands tobacco products being delivered directly to consumers. Shipments directly to consumers should be prohibited and only allowed to in state brick and mortar licensed retailers where consumer’s identification is properly checked to verify that they are over the age of 21. This exemption may allow easy access for youth access to large cigars or pipe tobacco products.

Flavored Cigars

Flavored cigars are very popular among youth and young adults. A 2015 study found that 74 percent of youth who used cigars reported flavoring as a primary reason for using them.^{i, ii} In 2023,

64.8 percent of students who currently use cigars reported using flavored cigars in the past 30 daysⁱⁱⁱ Importantly, flavored cigars can also serve as a gateway for people who do not use tobacco products to start using tobacco. A 2019 longitudinal study found that, among youth aged 12-17 who began using cigars during the study period, 45.2 percent reported that their first product was flavored.^{iv} This same study found that young adults aged 18-24 who start with flavored cigars are more likely to regularly use cigars compared to those who start with unflavored cigars.

To prevent youth from accessing cigars and pipe tobacco products, please consider not exempting these tobacco products from being shipped directly to consumers.

Thank you for the opportunity to OPPOSE HB 1532. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Government Relations Director Cynthia Au at Cynthia.Au@Cancer.org or 808.460.6109.

ⁱ Flavors. Truth Initiative; 2018. <https://truthinitiative.org/sites/default/files/media/files/2019/03/Truth-Flavors-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

ⁱⁱ Ambrose BK, Day HR, Rostron B, et al. Flavored Tobacco Product Use Among US Youth Aged 12-17 Years, 2013-2014. JAMA. 2015;314(17):1871. doi:10.1001/jama.2015.13802

ⁱⁱⁱ

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2023). Supplementary Table 2. Flavored tobacco product (except exclusive use of tobacco-flavored or unflavored) use among middle and high school students overall and among those who reported current (past 30-day) use of each tobacco product, by school level, sex, and race and ethnicity — National Youth Tobacco Survey, United States, 2023 [Data table]. MMWR. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, 72(44). <https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/134701>

^{iv} Villanti AC, Johnson AL, Glasser AM, et al. Association of Flavored Tobacco Use With Tobacco Initiation and Subsequent Use Among US Youth and Adults, 2013-2015. JAMA Netw Open. 2019;2(10):e1913804. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2019.13804

Excluding Cigars Undermines Public Health

All cigars, including large cigars, cigarillos, and little cigars pose a serious threat to Americans' health, with 10.2 million U.S. adults reporting current cigar use in 2022.¹ Yet, these products remain less regulated than other tobacco products, including cigarettes and e-cigarettes. Policy loopholes often leave cigars out of evidence-based tobacco control measures: **cigars are frequently taxed at lower rates than cigarettes, cigars are often exempted from smoke-free laws, and flavored cigars are not covered by existing federal flavor prohibitions.** These exclusions provide opportunity for the tobacco industry to aggressively market cigars to young people and at-risk communities.

Cigars must be taxed at the same rate as cigarettes

All cigars, regardless of size, must be taxed at rates equivalent to cigarettes with no cap on tax rates. Cigars, as with all tobacco products, should be subject to regular, significant excise tax increases to encourage people to quit rather than switch to cheaper, less-regulated cigars. Aligning cigar taxes with cigarette taxes helps keep prices high, discourage youth initiation, support quitting, and reduce tobacco-related health care costs and disparities.

Cigars must be included smoke-free laws

There is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke; even brief exposure can cause serious and potentially deadly health issues.^{6,7,8} Secondhand smoke from cigars poses significant health risks to people who smoke and those around them.⁵ To protect public health, **smoke-free laws must explicitly include cigars** and prohibit their use in cigar and tobacco shops, bars designated as “cigar bars,” gaming facilities, and all other places where smoking is prohibited.

Comprehensive smoke-free laws improve indoor air quality, reduce secondhand smoke exposure, change social norms regarding the acceptability of smoking, prevent youth and young adult smoking initiation, reduce asthma hospitalizations among people who don't smoke, and promote cessation.^{7,8}

Health Effects of Cigar Use

Cigar smoke contains the same potentially cancer-causing toxic compounds and chemicals found in cigarette smoke.⁵ Regular cigar smoking is estimated to be responsible for 9,000 premature deaths each year² **and increases the risk of cancers of the lung, oral cavity, larynx, and esophagus.**³

9,000 Premature Deaths are Linked to Cigar Smoking²

People who smoke cigars are four to ten times more likely to die from laryngeal, oral or esophageal cancers than people who do not smoke.⁴ Heavy cigar smoking also increases the risk of developing coronary heart diseases and lung diseases, such as emphysema and chronic bronchitis.⁵

\$27.9 billion in health care expenses⁶

Cigar-attributable annual health care expenditures are estimated to total \$27.9 billion annually between 2001-2018.⁶

People **who do not smoke but are exposed to secondhand smoke** at home or at work have a 25%–30% **higher risk of heart disease** and a 20%–30% **higher risk of lung cancer.**⁸

Smoke-free Exemptions Impact on Worker Health

A person’s place of employment should not determine whether they can breathe clean, smoke-free air while at work. **People who work in places where smoking is allowed have no choice but to inhale this deadly secondhand smoke on a regular basis.** They deserve the same protections as all workers.

Beyond health concerns, smoke-filled workplaces increase the economic burden of smoking including increased absenteeism, lost productivity, and increased maintenance and insurance costs that affect the bottom line for businesses and cause increased health care costs for taxpayers.

Flavored tobacco products, including cigars, must be prohibited

Characterizing flavors, including menthol, should be prohibited in all tobacco products, including cigars. Cigars, cigarillos, and little cigars are all sold in many flavors that are appealing to young people, such as menthol, banana, mango, grape, Tropical Twist, Purple Swish and chocolate. These flavored products are commonly sold by tobacco retailers such as convenience stores, but, unlike cigarettes, are not required to be placed behind the countertop.¹⁰ Flavored tobacco marketing especially for cigars are more likely to be found in predominantly Black communities compared to other communities.¹¹

Flavored cigars are very popular among youth and young adults. **In 2023, nearly two-thirds (64.8%) of youth who smoke cigars reported smoking a flavored cigar in the past 30 days, up from 44.4% in 2021.**¹² Flavored cigars can also serve as a gateway for people who do not use tobacco products to start using tobacco. Multiple longitudinal studies show that initiating cigar use with a flavored product is associated with a higher likelihood of subsequent and regular cigar use among youth and young adults.^{13,14}

VENTILATION

Ventilation systems do not protect people from the carcinogens found in secondhand smoke. The Surgeon General has concluded that separating people who smoke from those who don’t, ‘cleaning the air,’ and ventilating buildings **cannot eliminate exposure to secondhand smoke.**⁷ The only effective way to fully protect nonsmokers from exposure to secondhand smoke is to completely eliminate smoking in indoor public spaces.

Disparities in Youth Cigar Use

An estimated 330,000 U.S. students reported current use of cigars in 2024. Black students are significantly more likely to use cigars than their peers. In 2024, 2.7% of surveyed Black high school students reported using cigars in the past 30 days, compared to 1.5% among all high school students.¹⁵

Cigars are currently the 2nd most popular tobacco product among Black youth¹⁵

These disparities are due in part to tobacco industry marketing practices that result in higher exposure to tobacco advertising and promotions and greater tobacco retail outlet density in communities of color. Research has found that retailers in neighborhoods with a higher proportion of Black residents and in lower-income neighborhoods are more likely to **sell flavored little cigars and cigarillos, display exterior cigar advertisements, offer price promotions, and feature youth-appealing marketing** than retailers in neighborhoods with fewer Black residents and higher income levels.¹¹

1. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). 2022 NSDUH Detailed Tables [Internet]. Rockville, MD: SAMHSA. 2022. Available from: <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/report/2022-nsduh-detailed-tables>
2. Nonnemaker, J., Rostron, B., Hall, P., MacMonegle, A., & Apelberg, B. (2014). Mortality and economic costs from regular cigar use in the United States, 2010. *American Journal of Public Health*, 104(9), e86–e91. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2014.301991>
3. Cancer Facts and Figures. American Cancer Society; 2025. [2025 Cancer Facts & Figures](#)
4. American Cancer Society. (2024, November 19). [Is any type of tobacco product safe?](#) American Cancer Society.
5. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2024, September 10). [Cigars](#). U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
6. Xu X, Homsí G, Liu ST, Gaber JM, Inyang NA, Rostron BL, et al. (2025) [Annual U.S. healthcare expenditures attributable to cigar smoking between 2001 and 2018, overall and by payer](#). *PLoS One* 20(12): e0337757. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0337757>
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February 5, 2026

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

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

RE: **HB 1532** - Relating to Taxation
Hearing Date: February 6, 2026
Time: 9:00 am

The Cigar Association of America, Inc. (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 bill will significantly impact its members and their ability to conduct business in Hawaii.

CAA supports the intent of **HB 1532** which would exclude the direct sale of large cigars and pipe tobacco to adult consumers for personal use from the unlawful shipment of tobacco products. Cigar and pipe retail websites utilize age gating technology to restrict underage browsing and require additional proof of age to make purchases. There is simply no law enforcement nor public health data which supports banning cigar and pipe tobacco from shipment to consumers. Yet, it unfairly limits adult consumer choices, restricts commerce and also deprives the State of revenue.

CAA, however, submits that it is also necessary for online retailers to have a mechanism to remit the applicable tobacco taxes to the State. Unfortunately, Hawaii does not currently have such mechanism. CAA has engaged in initial conversation with the Attorney General's office on this matter and asks that the bill be deferred to allow time for a solution to be developed.

Thank you for considering this testimony.



LATE

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HB 1532

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

FROM: Michael Paul, Certified Tobacco Treatment Specialist

DATE: February 6, 2026 (9:00 AM)

Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHRC) **strongly opposes** HB 1532.

HB 1532 would have the effect of allowing anyone in Hawai'i that says they are 21 years of age to have large cigars or pipe tobacco shipped directly to them. This exemption creates a hole in the state's protection of public health by allowing unmonitored sales of some tobacco products.

There is no public health reason to allow for this exemption, but there are public health reasons for continuing to keep the unlawful shipping law as it currently stands. Cigars contain more tar and nicotine than cigarettes, and just like cigarettes they are a cause of heart disease, multiple forms of cancer, and COPD. Further, adults in Hawai'i who are 21 years or older are currently allowed to purchase these products from local retailers, questioning the need for such an exemption.

With the ongoing support of the Hawai'i Community Foundation, HHRC 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.

HB-1532

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 2:56:08 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

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

I respectfully submit testimony in support of HB1532, which clarifies Hawai'i law by excluding the direct shipment of large cigars and pipe tobacco to adults aged twenty-one and over for personal use from the offense of unlawful shipment of tobacco products.

The original intent of the unlawful shipment statute was to prevent youth access to tobacco and nicotine products, particularly through mail-order sales. However, the current law unintentionally captures large cigars and pipe tobacco, products that are legally sold to adults and permitted to be shipped under federal law. HB1532 makes a narrowly tailored correction that preserves public health protections while avoiding unnecessary overreach.

This bill is important not only for adult consumers, but also for law-abiding businesses, including specialty tobacco retailers and small businesses that rely on lawful sales to adult customers. As written, the existing statute creates confusion and potential liability for businesses engaging in legal commerce, even when robust age-verification practices are in place. Clarifying the law will allow these businesses to operate responsibly while remaining compliant with both state and federal regulations.

HB1532 also respects the reality that some adults choose to smoke cigars or pipe tobacco as a legal personal choice. Adults who comply with age restrictions and purchase these products for personal use should not face criminal penalties for conduct that is otherwise lawful. The bill does not weaken protections against youth access, nor does it promote tobacco use. Instead, it draws a clear distinction between protecting minors and respecting adult autonomy.

Importantly, this measure maintains the Legislature's public health intent by continuing to prohibit unlawful shipments and sales to minors, while ensuring that enforcement efforts remain focused where they are most needed. By aligning state law with federal standards, HB1532 provides clarity, fairness, and consistency for consumers, businesses, and regulators alike.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to support and pass HB1532.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.

HB-1532

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 12:31:42 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Jay Ihara, and I firmly oppose HB1532.

Cigars, like all tobacco products, pose significant health risks, and there are no sound public health justifications for allowing an exemption specifically for them. Granting such exemptions is a dangerous precedent that could lead to a cascade of additional allowances in the future.

The act of cigar smoking is associated with severe health issues, including various forms of cancer, heart disease, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, which can drastically impair quality of life. Moreover, large cigars often contain higher concentrations of harmful substances such as nicotine, tar, and carbon monoxide than traditional cigarettes, further endangering the health of users and those exposed to secondhand smoke. It is imperative that we recognize these dangers and maintain a comprehensive approach to tobacco regulation.

Cigars are tobacco products; there are no public health reasons to allow a cigar exemption. Allowing exemptions is a slippery slope and can open the door for more exemptions. Cigar smoking causes cancer, heart disease, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Large cigars can contain more nicotine, tar, and carbon monoxide than cigarettes.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

HB-1532

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 1:27:41 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristin Mills	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am strongly opposed to HB1532. Unlawful shipment of ALL tobacco products need to be strictly enforced.

Sincerely, Kristin Mills

HB-1532

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 2:16:58 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
mary santa maria	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee,

As a citizen of Hawaii I oppose the HB1532.

- Cigars are tobacco products; there are no public health reasons to allow a cigar exemption.
- Allowing exemptions is a slippery slope and can open the door for more exemptions.
- Cigar smoking causes cancer, heart disease, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.
- Large cigars can contain more nicotine, tar, and carbon monoxide than cigarettes.

sincerely,

M. Santa Maria

HB-1532

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 3:07:31 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Katie Folio	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha and thank you for taking the time to read my testimony on this proposed legislation.

Cigars are tobacco products and there is no reason to exempt them from current tobacco shipping laws. They cause cancer and even can contain more nicotine, tar, and carbon monoxide than cigarettes. For these reasons, they should be regulated the same as all other tobacco products. Exempting them may open the door for other exemptions and start to unravel the good work we have done around tobacco regulation and control over the last several decades. Please do not allow for this to happen.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Katie Folio

Maui, HI

Date: February 4, 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: **Oppose HB1532**, Relating to Taxation

Hrg: Friday February 6, 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 to **strongly oppose HB1532**, which excludes from the offense of unlawful shipment of tobacco products the direct sale of large cigars and pipe tobacco to adult consumers for personal use.

All tobacco products (including cigars and pipe tobacco) cause harm to health. There are no rational public health reasons to allow an exclusion for any tobacco products.

Giving an exclusion sends our youth a mixed message on the health risks of tobacco products, which we know are many, serious and deadly.

Like smoking cigarettes, cigar smoking causes cancer, heart disease, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Contrary to popular belief, pipe smoking is also unsafe and increases the risk of mouth, lung and bladder cancers.

Smoking cigars or pipe tobacco exposes the smoker to more nicotine, tar, and carbon monoxide than cigarettes, all of which harm the body and compromise health.

Giving some tobacco products an exclusion from current law is neither in the public interest nor in any sense maintaining reasonable consumer protection from a group of products that pose clear health dangers with use.

I **strongly oppose HB1532** and respectfully ask you to reject this bill.

Many thanks for your consideration,

Forrest Batz, PharmD
Keaau, HI

HB1532

Large cigars and Pipe Tobacco Exclusion

I am writing in opposition to HB 1532, which excludes large cigars and pipe tobacco from the offense of unlawful shipment of tobacco products. Cigars and pipe tobacco are definitively tobacco products. There is no excuse for excluding the from the prohibition of unlawful shipments. They have no public health benefits, and in fact large cigars contain more nicotine and carbon monoxide than cigarettes. Thus they can cause cancer, heart disease, and COPD.

Large cigars and pipe tobacco should be as closely regulated as other tobacco products. There is no reason for these products to be granted an exemption so that they might endanger the public.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Weiner, MD

Kauai

HB-1532

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 7:46:26 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

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

As an RN and public health advocate, I am asking you to please oppose this bill. Cigars are tobacco products; there are no public health reasons to allow a cigar exemption. Allowing exemptions is a slippery slope and can open the door for more exemptions.

Cigar smoking causes cancer, heart disease, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Large cigars can contain more nicotine, tar, and carbon monoxide than cigarettes.

Please do the right thing and oppose this bill.

Mahalo for your time and attention.

HB-1532

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 10:21:51 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bryan Mih	Individual	Oppose	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, it is vitally important to oppose this bill, which carves out an exemption from laws regarding illegal shipment of certain tobacco products.

No tobacco or nicotine products should be exempt, as all tobacco products are health hazards. Secondhand smoke from cigars and pipes can affect our keiki and nonsmokers. They can contain higher amounts of nicotine, tar, and carbon monoxide. These products cause cancer, heart disease, lung disease, and many other health issues. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) strongly supports regulation of tobacco and nicotine products to prevent initiation of use.

If we care about people's health, we should be creating more restrictions on tobacco, not loosening our existing laws. Please oppose this measure. Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Bryan Mih, MD MPH FAAP

Pediatrician

Medical Director, Kapi'olani Smokefree Families

LATE

HB-1532

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 2:23:10 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/6/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

I am **opposed** to HB1532. No tobacco products should be allowed to be shipped to personal addresses. All tobacco related purchases by consumers should be made through a licensed business where it can be properly inventoried and taxed.

Mahalo!