



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Written Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

March 23, 2015 at 10:00 am

By

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and

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HB 145 HD1 Proposed SD1 – RELATING TO TAXATION

Chair Baker, Vice Chair Taniguchi, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i strongly supports the proposed SD1 of this bill.

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

Our passion at the UH Cancer Center is to be a world leader in eliminating cancer through research, education and improved patient care. Because tobacco consumption is a leading preventable cause of cancer, we take all issues related to tobacco very seriously, and we have always supported strong tobacco control measures in Hawai'i. The increasing popularity of other types of tobacco products and the recent emergence of electronic smoking devices present new challenges for tobacco control and tobacco-related legislation.

The proposed SD1 addresses a serious concern among health professionals that addictive tobacco products other than cigarettes – including snuff, chewing tobacco and loose roll-your-own tobacco – are attracting a new generation of tobacco users. While the dangers of smoking are well known, national research also tells us there is no safe form of tobacco use. Since the cigarette tax increases were imposed beginning in 2006, sales have decreased steadily, which may indicate that the higher cost to consumers had the disincentive intended. However, smokers have switched from cigarettes to other types of tobacco products and electronic smoking devices.

Health advocates urge consistent and equal taxation of the various forms of tobacco to avoid attracting consumers, especially youth, to products that are a less expensive substitute for cigarettes.

We respectfully urge this Committee to pass the proposed SD1.