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In reply, please refer to:  
File:

## HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

### **HCR 108, Requesting the Department of Health to Convene a Task Force to Investigate the Risks Involved in the Use and Consumption of Phthalates, Bisphenol-A, and Aspartame in Consumer Products, Especially by Young Children**

**Testimony of Chiyome Leinaala Fukino, M.D.  
Director of Health**

**March 12, 2008  
11:00A.M.**

1 **Department's Position:** The Department of Health respectfully opposes the measure on the basis that it  
2 is unnecessary and premature.

3 **Fiscal Implications:** The Department estimates that it would require at least one additional full time  
4 staff member to complete the task. The Department or any other agency assigned to study the issues,  
5 such as the Legislative Reference Bureau, will need supplemental financial support to implement the  
6 resolution. We ask that the Legislature instead support the priorities contained in the executive  
7 supplemental budget proposal.

8 **Purpose and Justification:** The resolution requests that the department convene a task force to  
9 investigate the risks associated with the use and consumption of phthalates, bisphenol-A, and aspartame  
10 in consumer products, especially in young children.

11 The resolution is in part unnecessary and in part premature. Regarding aspartame, the American  
12 Medical Association states that consumption of aspartame by normal humans (those who do not suffer  
13 from the rare disease, phenylketonuria) is safe and not associated with serious adverse health effects.

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1 Both the World Health Organization and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approve aspartame as  
2 safe for adults and children. Aspartame has been well studied and has a sufficient body of evidence on  
3 the risks involved in its use and consumption. We do not see that the Hawaii task force would have the  
4 expertise or resources to conduct research or analyses that would lead to different conclusions.

5 We note that the resolution already condemns aspartame as a poisonous and deleterious food  
6 additive, so we do not understand the point of studying something on which the legislature has already  
7 made its finding.

8 For the other two compounds, bisphenol-A and phthalates, it is premature to convene a task force  
9 to evaluate the health risks. Bisphenol-A and phthalates currently lack sufficient toxicology information  
10 to determine whether health effects could possibly occur in people who are exposed to them. For both  
11 bisphenol-A and phthalates, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention has concluded that more  
12 research is needed to assess the human health effects of these compounds. Again, we do not see that a  
13 Hawaii task force would have the expertise or resources to conduct research or analyses that would lead  
14 to different conclusions. We see no value for the Department of Health to commit a staff member to  
15 convene a task force and prepare a report on these chemicals' possible health risk, when it is known in  
16 advance that the body of evidence is insufficient. We will continue to monitor the emerging science on  
17 these compounds and talk with other state and federal agencies interested in legislating the use of these  
18 chemicals in consumer products.

19 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.

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