

TO: Representative Marcus, Chair  
Representative Lee, Vice Chair  
Committee on Finance

RE: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB895  
Relating to Tax on Tobacco Products Other than Cigarettes  
Hearing on Friday, February 27, 2009, 12:00 p.m.  
Conference Room 308, State Capitol

February 27, 2009

Dear Legislators,

My name is Michele Magdirila and I live on the island of Molokai. I am a REAL youth board member. REAL is Hawaii's youth-led movement exposing the truth about the tobacco industry.

I strongly support the tobacco tax increase on OTPs (Other tobacco products) that is being proposed. It will reduce the rate of tobacco users because the products will be more expensive. More importantly, younger people will want to stop buying these deadly products because they will cost more.

I really believe that younger people across the world continue to use tobacco products because the big tobacco companies target us with their advertising more than any other group. By increasing the tax on OTPs you will be helping to protect my generation from big tobacco companies.

Please pass this tobacco tax increase.

Mahalo,  
Michele Magdirila

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Aloha Legislators,

My name is John Pimentel. I am from the island of Hawaii and am a member of REAL: Hawaii's Youth Movement Exposing the Tobacco Industry.

I strongly support the tax increase on tobacco products (OTPs) because it will decrease the number of youth tobacco users in Hawaii. I believe that youth do not understand Other Tobacco Products (OTP) can lead to dangerous health problems. By raising the taxes of OTPs you will discourage youth from buying these harmful products.

Please pass the bill to increase the taxes of Other Tobacco Products.

Much Mahalo,  
John Pimentel

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Dear Legislators,

My name is Chelsey Chapman from the island of Maui, Hawaii. I am 16 years old and attend Baldwin High School. I am a part of Hawaii's youth-led movement against the tobacco industry called REAL. I strongly support the tobacco tax increase on other tobacco products (OTPs).

For some time, the tobacco industry has been developing new products other than cigarettes to try and get youth and adults addicted to their products. Not only does it target adults, but most importantly, it targets youth to use smokeless tobacco. I feel that we need to take a stand against the tobacco industry.

By increasing the tax, the use of tobacco will decrease. This price increase will decrease the use of smokeless tobacco in both youth and adults. This will help create a healthier life for everyone. Please consider the proposal to raise the tax on OTPs to help create a better Hawaii.

Thank you,  
Chelsey Chapman

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My name is Sheryll Yotsuda and I am originally from the island of Kauai, now Oahu. I am 21-years-old and attend UH-Manoa, I represent the young adult generation from the REAL! Alumni Network and I am testifying in support of HB895, which would effectively increase the tobacco tax on other tobacco products (OTC) other than cigarettes from 40% to 60% of the wholesale price.

All if not some of the revenue should be dedicated to funding tobacco prevention and control efforts like cessation classes (many want to quit; should have services to help).

This tax increase will bring in revenue and reduces tobacco use.

Chew as well as new and emerging products are being marketed to youth—with flavored tobacco and stunning packaging designed to lure young people.

By increasing the price of tobacco, smokeless tobacco use will decrease among both adults and youth. In particular, youth are two to three times more sensitive to tobacco price changes than adults.

Youth use of smokeless tobacco is up among both high school students and middle school students. Rates of Smokeless Tobacco Use in 2003 and 2007. An increase from 2.8% up to 3.7% in high school students; increase from 1.7% to 2.8% for middle school students (Hawaii State Department of Health, Data Highlights from the 2007 Hawaii Youth Tobacco Survey (YTS) and Comparisons with Prior Years. September 2008)

Tax rates of other tobacco products (OTC) must be increased based on percentage price and be comparable to that of cigarettes to ensure declines in use. This will lead to improved health as smokeless tobacco use can lead to cancer of the esophagus, pharynx, larynx, stomach, and pancreas; gum disease; and risk of cardiovascular disease.

This is an opportunity to bring in much needed revenue. I support the bill and ask that you pass it out of committee.

Please accept this as my written testimony in support of HB895. Thank you in advance for your consideration. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Sheryll Yotsuda  
REAL! Alumni Network  
Speech Communication Society

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Dear Legislators,

My name is Amanda Victorino and I am from Kapolei. I am a member of REAL: Hawaii's youth-led movement exposing the tobacco industry.

I am writing to support the tax increase on Other Tobacco Products (OTPs).

I believe that most youth do not know the dangers of OTPs. In addition, there have been no studies done on the effects of some of the newest OTPs like snus. These products could be just as dangerous or even more dangerous than cigarettes.

By increasing the taxes on OTPs, product sales would decrease, which would really make a difference to the health of Hawaii and my generation.

Please pass the law to increase the tax on OTPs.

Thank You,  
Amanda Victorino

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Dear Legislator,

My name is Lea Meliza Pigao and I live on the beautiful island of Maui and go to Maui High School. I am currently a REAL youth board member. REAL is Hawaii's youth-led movement exposing the truth about the tobacco industry.

I completely support the tax increase of OTPs (Other Tobacco Products) because I believe that it will reduce the number of teens purchasing tobacco products. I believe that one reason teens use tobacco products is because of its accessibility and of its cheap cost. This higher price would make it harder for teens to afford these products. By increasing the price of tobacco, smokeless tobacco use will decrease among both adults and youth. This will allow teens and adults to live a healthier life.

With that said, please pass the tobacco tax increase on OTPs.

Thank you,  
Lea Meliza Pigao

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Dear Legislators,

My name is Alex Halley from Wailuku. I am a youth leader with REAL: Hawaii's Youth Movement Exposing the Tobacco Industry.

I am writing in support of a tax increase on Other Tobacco Products (OTPs). The tobacco companies know that if OTPs are taxed, then the public won't buy as much. This is especially true of youth.

Please pass this law to tax OTPs and keep these products out of the hands of Hawaii's youth.

Sincerely,  
Alex Halley

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Dear Legislators,

Hi. My name is Sara Jean Banks and I am testifying with support of HB895, which effectively increases the tobacco tax on other tobacco products (OTC) other than cigarettes from 40% to 60% of the wholesale price.

All, if not some, of the revenue should be dedicated to funding tobacco prevention and control efforts like cessation classes (many want to quit and should have services to help).

This tax increase will bring in revenue and reduces tobacco use.

Chew, as well as new and emerging products, are being marketed to youth—with flavored tobacco and stunning packaging designed to lure young people.

By increasing the price of tobacco, smokeless tobacco use will decrease among both adults and youth. In particular youth, who are two to three times more sensitive to tobacco price changes than adults.

Youth use of smokeless tobacco is up among both high school students and middle school students. **Rates of Smokeless Tobacco Use in 2003 and 2007: an increase from 2.8% up to 3.7% in high school students; increase from 1.7% to 2.8% for middle school students** (Hawaii State Department of Health, Data Highlights from the 2007 Hawaii Youth Tobacco Survey (YTS) and Comparisons with Prior Years. September 2008)

Tax rates of other tobacco products (OTC) must be increased based on percentage price and be comparable to that of cigarettes to ensure declines in use. This will lead to improved health as smokeless tobacco use can lead to cancer of the esophagus, pharynx, larynx, stomach, and pancreas; gum disease; and risk of cardiovascular disease.

This is an opportunity to bring in much needed revenue. I support the bill and ask that you pass it out of committee.

Please accept this as my written testimony in support of HB895. Thank you in advance for your consideration. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sara Jean Banks". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and address.

Sara Jean Banks  
552 Halela Street, Kailua, Hawaii



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Dear Legislators,

My name is Lleliena Loynaz, and I am testifying in support of HB895, which would effectively increase the tobacco tax on other tobacco products (OTP) other than cigarettes from 40% to 60% of the wholesale price.

For example, youth use of smokeless tobacco is up among high school students and middle school students. Rates of Smokeless Tobacco Use in 2003 and 2007. An increase from 2.8% up to 3.7% in high school students; increase from 1.7% to 2.8% for middle school students (Hawaii State Department of Health, Data Highlights from the 2007 Hawaii Youth Tobacco Survey (YTS) and Comparisons with Prior Years. September 2008).

It is important to recognize that smokeless tobacco, as well as new and emerging products are being marketed to youth in our state and nationwide—this includes flavored tobacco and stunning packaging designs to lure young people.

By increasing the price of tobacco, smokeless tobacco use will decrease among both adults and youth. Youth are two to three times more sensitive to tobacco price changes than adults.

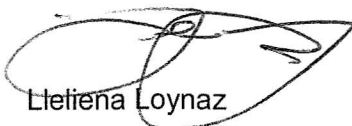
This is also an opportunity for our state to use the funds collected from HB895 to counter the aggressive advertising of products the tobacco industry uses to addict Hawaii's youth. Revenues from this bill can be invested back into communities by funding tobacco prevention and control efforts like cessation classes (those who want to quit should have services to help), as well as continued youth education/awareness programs on industry tactics and the harmful effects of their products.

This is not only an opportunity to bring in much needed revenues in prevention efforts, but also this will lead to improved health as the use of tobacco products can lead to cancer of the esophagus, pharynx, larynx, stomach, lungs, and pancreas, as well as gum disease and the risk of cardiovascular disease.

I support the bill and ask that you pass it out of committee.

Please accept this as my written testimony in support of HB895. Thank you in advance for your consideration. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

  
Lleliena Loynaz

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Dear Legislator,

My name is Chloe Marchant and I am from the island of Kauai. I am a Youth Leader with REAL: Hawaii's Youth Movement Exposing the Tobacco Industry.

I am writing to you to ask that you increase taxes on the Other Tobacco Products (OTP), such as cigars, smokeless tobacco, spit-less and dissolvable tobacco. These products are being targeted to youth by tobacco companies and they are very cheap to purchase.

Increasing taxes on these products will help keep them out of the hands of kids!

Thank You,  
Chloe Marchant

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Dear Legislators:

My name is Nicole Sutton and I am with REAL: Hawaii Youth Movement Exposing the Tobacco Industry. I reside in Honolulu and am a registered voter.

I am writing in strong support of HB895 which would increase the tax on Other Tobacco Products (OTPs) in Hawaii.

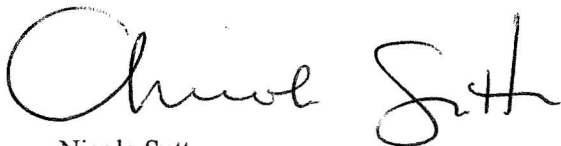
For the past eight years I have watched young people across Hawaii fight to protect their peers from the deceptive tactics of the tobacco companies. With smoke-free laws in place throughout the state, youth now face their next challenge: increased use of OTPs by young people. Hawaii's Youth Tobacco Survey confirms OTP use rates are on the increase in our state.

Our organization believes this is due to 3 main factors: 1) OTPs are very inexpensive and highly accessible in most stores; 2) the marketing of these products is on the rise in Hawaii. Promotional signage is found from the most urban to most rural stores across Hawaii; 3) many young people do not deem these products to be as dangerous as cigarettes since they most often include flavors of gum and candy products popular with youth such as grape, cherry, berry, and mint.

Increasing the tax on these products will be one step in the right direction of protecting Hawaii's youth from these deadly products. It also sends a strong message to tobacco companies who need to keep their products as cheap and accessible as possible to addict new customers for the 450,000 they kill every year!

Please protect Hawaii's future by increasing taxes on OTPs immediately.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nicole Sutton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Nicole Sutton  
Project Director  
REAL: Hawaii Youth Movement Exposing the Tobacco Industry  
Cancer Research Center of Hawaii  
University of Hawai – Manoa