

**SB2140**

# LATE



American Heart Association | American Stroke Association

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## Testimony for SB 2140, "Relating To Health"

The American Heart Association supports SB 2140, but would like to point out several inadequacies in the bill.

The American Heart Association has long recognized that the consumption of artificial trans fats is a health risk to the American people and encourages their removal from packaged goods and foods prepared in restaurants and bakeries. In 2006, the association issued its Diet and Lifestyle Recommendations, which advise people to limit their consumption of trans fats to no more than one percent of daily caloric intake. By following our primary recommendation to eat a healthy overall diet that emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grain foods, fat-free and low-fat dairy products, lean meats, poultry and fish twice a week, people will necessarily reduce their consumption of trans fats, saturated fats and cholesterol – all important measures in the fight against cardiovascular disease.

The American Heart Association **supports regulatory efforts at the local level to reduce trans fats in packaged foods, baked goods and restaurant meals, provided healthy alternatives and practical guidance are taken into consideration.** It feels that such efforts are most likely to achieve their intended goal if they incorporate a comprehensive "phased-in approach" to eliminating the use of artificial trans fats. The association wants to ensure that a sufficient supply of healthier alternative oils and shortenings are available to restaurants and bakeries to prevent the substitution of unhealthy alternatives. Actions taken merely to comply with the letter of the regulation or law make little sense when viewed in terms of the ultimate goal to decrease cardiovascular disease among Americans.

The strategy we envision involves thorough education of the cook, baker and restaurant operator, as well as an open, enthusiastic and collegial collaboration among nutrition scientists, food technologists and chemists, food manufacturers, agriculture and oil processing industries, distributors and government and regulatory staff. **Unfortunately, SB 2140 as currently written does not include an educational component.**

Local ordinances and food code regulations that ban the use of trans fats in restaurants certainly represent one strategy that may reduce trans fat consumption in the American diet. However, a mandatory ban of trans fats alone, if unaccompanied by an effective program of education and reasonable implementation, may raise the risk of unintended consequences (e.g. the substitution of trans fats with unhealthy oils high in saturated fats). As supplies of healthy, trans-free oils become more abundant and restaurants find appropriate substitutes for baking and identify successful techniques, these issues will be of less concern.

### Recommendations for Restaurant Assistance

The State should consider providing education and guidance to restaurants and bakeries regarding alternative oils and fats that can meet the frying and baking needs in their establishments. This guidance is particularly important for individual food service establishments and small chains.

- Provide the food service industry with specific guidance on which cooking oils and shortenings to use and how to incorporate them into their food preparation processes

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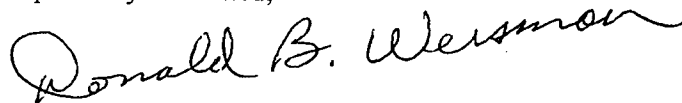
(e.g. specific recipes, different oil temperatures, appropriate schedules for frying oil changes).

- Restaurants should receive information on how to obtain a ready supply of healthier alternative oil products.
- Information and assistance should be readily available in a timely and on-going fashion to restaurants in various forms for effective outreach, such as written and Web-based directories and product information.

**A second concern for SB 2140 is that it does not identify which agency will be responsible for enforcing this law.** Without proper enforcement there will no guarantee of compliance since the consumer likely will be unable to differentiate between products being made with trans fats or with healthier alternatives.

The AHA encourages legislators to consider the comments offered above to insure that the intent of SB 2140 is fulfilled and that Hawaii's consumers are provided with healthier consumable products.

Respectfully submitted,



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