



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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In reply, please refer to:
File:

House Committee on Health

HCR 122, REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF TAXATION TO CONVENE A WORKING GROUP TO EVALUATE THE FEASIBILITY OF IMPOSING A SALES TAX ON NON-ESSENTIAL FOOD ITEMS

Testimony of Loretta J. Fuddy, A.C.S.W., M.P.H.
Director of Health

March 26, 2013

1 **Department's Position:** COMMENTS.

2 **Fiscal Implications:** The Department of Health takes no position on the establishment of new taxes.

3 **Purpose and Justification:** The purpose of HCR 122 is to consider a sales tax on non-essential food
4 items. The Department of Health is identified as a participant of the work group.

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6 DOH supports the concept of encouraging greater availability and consumption of healthful foods such
7 as fresh fruits and vegetables and acknowledges that unhealthy, non-essential, and highly processed
8 food items are comparatively inexpensive. Public health research has demonstrated that price sensitivity
9 is a factor in consumer behavior, particularly disparate populations with lower socio-economic status.

10 That population is also disproportionately impacted by obesity and chronic diseases caused and
11 exacerbated by unhealthy foods.

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