

SB1085

LATE

TESTIMONY



NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR

EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
HONOLULU

Testimony in **SUPPORT** of SB1085
Relating to Obesity Prevention

Committee on Health
Senator Josh Green, Chair
Senator Rosalyn Baker, Vice Chair

Committee on Judiciary and Labor
Senator Clayton Hee, Chair
Senator Maile Shimabukuro, Vice Chair

February 6, 2013
1:15 pm
Room 229

Chair Green, Chair Hee, Vice Chair Baker, Vice Chair Shimabukuro and members of the Health and Judiciary and Labor committees:

The Office of the Governor **supports** Senate Bill 1085, Relating to Obesity Prevention. This measure proposes to establish a fee of 1 cent per ounce on sugar-sweetened beverages. The fee is expected to increase the price of sugar-sweetened beverages by an average of 17%. It is also expected to reduce consumption by 8-10 percent and maybe even higher on youth. If this bill passes, in 2014-15 we are hoping to raise \$38 million in new revenue and will use these funds to support childhood and adult obesity prevention and health promotion programs.

Studies show that sugar-sweetened beverages are strongly linked to increased rates of obesity and risks for diabetes. A 2003 study in Hawaii found that 53.3% of adults drink soda at least two to four times a month and 25.9% of them drinking soda almost every day. Since the late 1970's, intake of sugar-sweetened beverages among adults ages 19 and older more than doubled.

In Hawaii, approximately 1 in 3 of our keiki entering kindergarten are overweight or obese. Each additional 12-ounce soft drink consumed per day increases their odds of becoming obese by 60% and doubles the risk of dental caries. Studies have also shown that replacing sugar-sweetened beverage with a non-caloric beverage significantly reduced the weight gain and body fat in children.

Currently 23% of the adults in Hawaii are obese and 34% are overweight. Studies found that cardiovascular, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, dental erosion and pancreatic cancer are risks that are also associated with sugar-sweetened beverage consumption. Additionally, obesity-related medical expenditures were calculated to be over \$470 million in 2009 and are continuing to rise.

We need to begin to address our obesity and other obesity-related medical problems. Reducing the consumption of sugary beverages is only one strategy in the fight against obesity.

We are proposing to impose a fee on sugar-sweetened beverages because we have seen that increasing the price of sugar-sweetened beverage by 35% resulted in a 26% decrease in sales. Sales decreased by an additional 18% when coupled with an educational campaign about the positive health impact of reducing consumption. Other major government interventions have been successful in improving and protecting public health in smoking restrictions and tobacco taxes, air bags in autos and vaccinations.

We need to start now for the health of our keiki and all the people of Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.