



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
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Honolulu, HI 96801-3378  
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**Testimony COMMENTING on H.B. 0146, H.D. 1  
RELATING TO HEALTH**

REPRESENTATIVE SYLVIA LUKE, CHAIR  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Hearing Date: 2/20/19

Room Number: 308

1 **Fiscal Implications:** The Department of Health (DOH) defers to the priorities set forth in the  
2 Governor's Executive Biennium Budget request. The bill appropriates out of the general  
3 revenues an unspecified amount for fiscal year (FY) 2019-2020 and the same sum as may be  
4 necessary for FY 2020-2021 for the establishment of one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE)  
5 permanent veterinary medical officer position in the Department of Health.

6 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health (DOH) offers comments on H.B. 146, H.D.  
7 1. A quality public health veterinary epidemiologist, while beneficial to our mission, would  
8 require a considerable investment. Comments received by DOH from public health veterinarians  
9 in other states and at the federal level as well as the then president of the National Association of  
10 Public Health Veterinarians when DOH last attempted to recruit for the position indicated the  
11 salary level was well below expected. A 2016 American Veterinary Medical Association Report  
12 on the Market for Veterinarians found that compensation in the range of \$110,000 to \$120,000  
13 per year would be required for an average career satisfaction rating level  
14 ([http://www.aavmc.org/data/files/Annual%20Reports/V3\\_ECON\\_2016\\_Report3\\_MketVet\\_0614](http://www.aavmc.org/data/files/Annual%20Reports/V3_ECON_2016_Report3_MketVet_0614)  
15 [16.pdf](#)). Appropriation of adequate funding to provide a competitive salary would be essential  
16 to recruiting and maintaining a qualified individual in this position.

17 While zoonotic diseases are one of many infectious disease concerns and a public health  
18 veterinary epidemiologist would be helpful, the Department has built a strong partnership with  
19 our colleagues at the Department of Agriculture. The State Epidemiologist routinely consults

1 with and refers to the State Veterinarian on animal concerns which impact human health and vice  
2 versa. Staff from both state agencies have attended trainings and exercises together regarding  
3 public health investigations and emergency response, and readily provide recommendations and  
4 assistance in their respective areas of expertise as needed.

5 The responsibilities of the former veterinary medical officer have been assumed by others,  
6 specifically epidemiologists, in DOH, and some responsibilities have been adapted based on  
7 feedback from partners. For example, the Epi Bulletin has been modified to provide timely and  
8 succinct information on important topics such as mumps, flu, norovirus, and rat lungworm  
9 disease to public health and healthcare partners on a quarterly basis with current and past issues  
10 posted online (<http://health.hawaii.gov/docd/for-healthcare-providers/epi-bulletin/>).

11 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



**HAWAII VETERINARY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION**  
**P.O. Box 61309, Honolulu, Hawaii 96839-1309**

February 19, 2019

Committee on Finance  
Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair  
Representative Ty J.K. Cullen, Vice Chair

RE: HB 146, HD1 Relating to Health

Dear Committees on Agriculture and Health,

On behalf of the Hawaii Veterinary Medical Association, I would like to express our support of HB 146 and its appropriation of funds to support the re-establishment of a public health veterinarian position within the Department of Health.

We believe a public health veterinarian would bring a necessary and invaluable resource to the Department of Health. Veterinarians go through unique training beyond the typical human medical practitioner, including training in comparative physiology, toxicology, immunology, herd health, and zoonotic diseases (diseases spread between animals and people) to earn their Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree. Furthermore, the veterinary profession has a recognized specialty for practitioners of public health and preventive medicine, the American College of Veterinary Preventive Medicine (ACVPM), that certifies core competencies of epidemiology, infectious disease, environmental health, food safety, and public policy.

Other federal health agencies such as the US Department of Health and Human Services, US Department of Agriculture, Army Veterinary Corps, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as well as 32 state health departments already recognize and utilize veterinarians in public health roles. A public health veterinarian within Hawaii's Department of Health would be essential in promoting disease control responsibilities and serving as a liaison to animal and wildlife health experts and other non-traditional public health partners when unusual public health challenges arise such as zoonotic disease outbreaks.

Please SUPPORT HB 146 and re-establish a public health veterinarian position within Hawaii's Department of Health. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. Please contact me if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jill Yoshicedo".

Jill Yoshicedo, DVM  
Executive Vice-President  
Hawaii Veterinary Medical Association

**HB-146-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/19/2019 12:19:09 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2019 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Melodie Aduja	O`ahu County Committee on Legislative Priorities of the Democratic Party of Hawai`i	Support	No

Comments: