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To: The Honorable Laura H. Thielen, Chair;  
The Honorable Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair;  
and Members of the Senate Committee on Government Operations

From: Rona M. Suzuki, Director  
Department of Taxation

Re: **S.B. 2375, Relating to State Forms**

Date: Tuesday, January 28, 2020

Time: 2:45 P.M.

Place: Conference Room 225, State Capitol

The Department of Taxation (Department) supports the intent of this measure and offers the following comments.

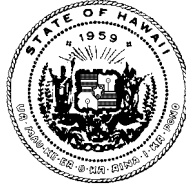
S.B. 2375 requires state agencies' forms and instructions be written in plain language, contain clear instructions, be posted on the agency's website, be available in physical form at the agency's location, and include contact information for additional assistance.

The Department presently has more than 200 forms that are maintained in multiple formats (i.e., web forms, PDF files, paper). We try to make our forms simple, clear, and user-friendly, but there are terms used in instructions that may not be considered plain language. The Department respectfully requests the following amendments:

1. Amend the effective date to January 1, 2021 to allow the Department sufficient time to meet all requirements;
2. Amend subsection (b)(1) to add "provided further that the sample listing may be provided in the accompanying instructions for the form." Forms are usually space limited and including an example on the form each time a schedule or list is required is not an efficient use of space; and
3. Amend subsection (b)(2) to add "instructions shall be available in the same manner as the form but are not required to be attached to the form." As some of the Department's forms are multiple pages long and require multiple pages of instructions, it would be difficult and inefficient for taxpayers if the form and instructions were always part of the same document.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

DAVID Y. IGE  
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DIRECTOR

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STATE OF HAWAII  
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January 27, 2020

TO: The Honorable Senator Laura H. Thielen, Chair  
Senate Committee on Government Operations

FROM: Pankaj Bhanot, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 2375 – RELATING TO STATE FORMS**

Hearing: January 28, 2020, 2:45 p.m.  
Conference Room 225, State Capitol

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of this measure and provides comments.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of the measure is to require any state agency that requires a person to submit information, data, or other materials to create a form, including instructions, that is written in plain language, to facilitate the collection of that information, data, or material.

The use of plain language in government documents aims to assist the public to read, understand, and access government services. DHS is dedicated to transform its delivery system and services to improve residents' access to benefits and services, as well as to improve our business processes to become more efficient and responsive to complex and changing needs. This includes simplification of application processes and forms for DHS programs and benefits. Since 2010 with the enactment of the Affordable Care Act, significant investment has been made to upgrade the DHS information systems from legacy systems to a DHS Enterprise Platform. Phase I of this initiative was the successful development of the Kauhale on-line eligibility determination application (KOLEA) for Medicaid; we are currently midway through Phase II to bring the financial benefits and SNAP programs on-line; Phase III will modernize the

child welfare services information systems. It has been a huge learning process to align programmatic terms and needs, secure funding, procure vendors, and keep up with significant changes in technology. In addition to easier access, improved accuracy, and faster processing, we anticipate the aligned data management systems will be better able to draw out more useable data sets.

DHS programs require applicants and recipients to complete forms and provide a lot of personal information. DHS is required by Federal and State laws and regulations to collect, maintain, and protect applicant and recipient information. DHS is also required by Federal and State laws and regulations to provide its forms in multiple languages so that individuals and families with limited English proficiency may access and understand program benefits and services. DHS currently has a budget request to establish and fund a permanent position for a Limited English Proficiency Coordinator. To further assure that DHS forms and communications are in plain language, DHS will likely also require an appropriation for a plain-language consultant or coordinator.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.