



March 12, 2020

To: The Senate Committee Members on Commerce, Consumer Protection and Health and
Committee Members on Agriculture and Environment
The Honorable Rosalyn Baker, Chair and Mike Gabbard, Chair
The Honorable Stanley Chang, Vice Chair and Russell Ruderman, Vice Chair

Re: Strong Support of HB 2718 HD1, Relating to Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

Hrg: March 13, 2020 at 9:15 AM at Capitol Room 228

The Hawaii Public Health Association (HPHA) is a group of over 600 community members, public health professionals and organizations statewide dedicated to improving public health. HPHA also serves as a voice for public health professionals and as a repository for information about public health in the Pacific.

HPHA strongly supports HB 2718 HD1, which would establish and appropriate funds for a climate change and human health adaptation coordinator within the Department of Health and related operating expenses. The health impacts of climate change are already being felt in our communities and funding a dedicated position to coordinate adaptation will significantly benefit the health of Hawaii now and in the future.

Climate change is the greatest threat to human health in the 21st century. Every individual will be affected by some combination of extreme weather, air pollution, sea level rise, infectious disease or a host of other challenges to daily living. We will experience changes in the severity and frequency of health problems that are already affected by climate and unprecedented or unanticipated health problems in places where they have not previously occurred. Extreme heat, powerful storms and floods and other climate related events have already displaced people from their homes, damaged infrastructure and caused significant personal loss and mental health impacts. Climate change is a risk multiplier, creating additional stressors for those already bearing a disproportionate burden of disease.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this critical opportunity to address climate change related health issues affecting people in Hawaii.

Respectfully submitted,

Tenaya Jackman, MPH
Climate Change Legislative Sub-Committee Chair
Hawaii Public Health Association