

PEA Committee

From: Helen Barrow <HelenB@ccmaui.org>
Sent: Thursday, January 04, 2018 10:21 AM
To: PEA Committee
Attachments: Testimony Template HB am.docx

Mahalo!
Mahalo nui loa,
Helen

To: The Honorable Yuki Lei Sugimura, Chair
The Honorable Stacy Crivello, Vice Chair
Honorable Members of the Maui County Council Policy, Economic Development, and Agriculture
Committee
Fr: Helen Barrow
Date: January 4, 2018
Re: STRONG SUPPORT for PEA-41, Prohibiting Smoking in Vehicles When Persons Under the Age of Eighteen
are Present

Hrg: January 4th, 2018 at 1:30 pm at Council Chambers, Kalana O Maui Building, 200 S High Street – 8th floor

I strongly support PEA-41, which would have the County of Maui prohibit smoking in a motor vehicle when a minor under the age of eighteen is present. I am a tobacco treatment specialist at Mālama I Ke Ola Health Center. Previously I was the Maui Program Coordinator for the American Lung Association of Hawaii. I am testifying today as a private citizen.

We need to protect our children from secondhand smoke. Even when car windows are down secondhand smoke can be up to ten times more toxic than what the EPA considers hazardous. My concern is shielding a vulnerable population from this exposure.

Thousands of children breathe in secondhand smoke in their own homes and cars daily. Inhaling secondhand smoke is especially harmful because children's lungs are still developing. Their lungs are smaller and they breathe more times per minute than adults. Every time they inhale secondhand smoke, they breathe in 7,000 chemicals, 200 of which are poisonous, and 50 are known to cause cancer.

Passive smoke exposure can cause children to miss out on their education. Inhaling toxic chemicals compromises their immune system, their ability to perform well in school and to engage in physical activity.

Just as Maui County has been protecting the public and its visitors from the dangers of secondhand smoke, I ask that you also protect our children and young people from the impacts of smoking in a vehicle. Smoking in a smaller space produces a dangerous concoction that lasts longer than previously thought.

Smoke-free car laws just like child safety seats, seat belts, and no cellphone use while driving, help to protect the health and safety of our children, and these laws are enforced in similar ways. Passing smoke-free cars into law will help decrease our children's exposure to secondhand smoke and educate parents and other adults about the dangers of smoking in a car when a minor is present. Smoking or vaping while driving is a distraction. It is safer not only to have clean air in vehicles for young lungs to breathe; it is also safer to have drivers with 2 hands on the wheel.

I also ask that you include electronic smoking devices in this law. The Surgeon General has stated that, "E-cigarette aerosol is not harmless. It can contain harmful and potentially harmful constituents including nicotine. Nicotine exposure during adolescence can cause addiction and can harm the developing adolescent brain" (E-Cigarette Use Among Youth and Young Adults: A Report of the Surgeon General, 2016).

I respectfully ask that you pass PEA-41 and eliminate smoking of cigarettes and use of electronic smoking devices in cars when a minor is present in Maui County.

Mahalo,
Helen Barrow
Makawao, Hi