

February 22, 2013

To: The Honorable Joey Manahan, Chair
The Honorable Ron Menor, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Parks
Honolulu City Council
530 S. King St.
Honolulu, HI 96813

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HONOLULU, HAWAII

From: YMCA Pioneering Healthy Communities – Honolulu

Re: Resolution 13-1 EBT Terminals at Open Markets

The YMCA Pioneering Healthier Communities Initiative brings together local, diverse leaders to discuss and support strategies, policies and programs that we can accomplish together to build healthier communities in our island home.

Our Community today is in the middle of an epidemic of obesity and chronic disease. Almost 1 in 4 adults are obese in Hawaii (BRFSS, 2010). The risk begins in early childhood; today about 1/3 of children are overweight or obese (YRBS 2011). In many of our rural and low-income communities, the problem is much more prevalent and more severe. This translates to thousands of children, adolescents and young adults with significant chronic disease risk in each of our communities.

The members of PHC are involved in helping children and families to become healthier through schools, afterschool programs, healthcare and more. However, we also know, first hand, the incredible challenges our most vulnerable and needy families are faced with in accessing fruits and vegetables within the means of very limited family resources.

If we are serious about supporting health, tackling healthcare costs and creating vibrant, more productive communities in Hawaii, ***we must work together at all levels to promote and support our families in making healthier choices as much as possible.***

Resolution 13-1 will help make a positive difference in the challenges our families face in accessing fresh fruits and vegetables at affordable prices. Our City has in place a model program of working with local farmers to provide Open Markets in low-income areas throughout Oahu. With the transfer of the SNAP system from food stamps to an electronic transfer system, participations at Open Markets over the past decade by SNAP recipients have declined significantly. With the passage of Resolution 13-1, this access can be restored. Resolution 13-1 will allow us to find ways of having Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) point-of-sale terminals at the City's People Open Markets to create venues that will assist our low-income families in purchasing and consuming fresh and healthy foods.

For these reasons, the enclosed list of members of the Pioneering Healthier Communities – Honolulu, support the Resolution 13-1 and strongly urge its passage.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide this testimony.

Enclosure