



DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

News Release

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**US TRADE AGREEMENTS SHOULD NOT
APPLY TO TOBACCO PRODUCTS**

HONOLULU – Attorney General David M. Louie joined 46 fellow state and territorial attorneys general in signing a letter sent to the U.S. Trade Representative, calling for the exclusion of tobacco and tobacco products when the Trade Representative negotiates international trade and investment agreements. The letter comes amid negotiations for the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement, a multilateral trade and investment agreement among Pacific Rim countries. The attorneys general are concerned that the Trade Representative’s draft proposal addressing tobacco would not adequately protect existing state and local regulation.

“As the chief legal officers of our states, we are concerned about any development that could jeopardize the states’ ability to enforce their laws and regulations relating to tobacco products,” the letter reads. “Experience has shown that state and local laws and regulations may be challenged by tobacco companies that aggressively assert claims under bilateral and multilateral trade and investment agreements.... Such agreements can enable these tobacco companies to challenge federal, state and local laws and regulations under standards and in forums that would not be available under United States law.”

“The State has made extensive efforts to reduce tobacco use, particularly among youth in Hawaii. We don’t want to threaten the substantial progress those efforts have made in protecting public health,” Attorney General Louie said. “In this letter we ask the U.S. Trade Representative to preserve the ability of state and local governments to regulate tobacco products in order to protect public health in any agreement he negotiates.”

The letter sent by the attorneys general can be found at http://www.naag.org/sign-on_archive.php.

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