



**DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR**

**CLARE E. CONNORS
ATTORNEY GENERAL**

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Hawai'i Attorney General Sues E-Cigarette Giants JUUL and Altria

HONOLULU – Attorney General Clare E. Connors yesterday filed a lawsuit against electronic-cigarette manufacturers JUUL Labs, Inc. (better known simply as JUUL) and Altria Group, Inc. (the parent company of Philip Morris and JUUL's largest shareholder), as well as certain key executives and directors, seeking penalties, damages, and injunctive relief for violations of Hawaii's Unfair and Deceptive Acts and Practices Law.

The complaint alleges that, for a period of more than five years, the defendants misleadingly marketed JUUL e-cigarettes, intending to hook users on the product in the same manner used by tobacco companies in the marketing of cigarettes. Among other things, the complaint alleges the defendants used marketing strategies that targeted teenagers, making JUUL products seem desirable, all while falsely understating the nicotine content of the product and its addictiveness.

"In marketing their e-cigarettes to Hawaii's children, these companies ripped pages directly out of the tobacco-company playbook and resurrected Joe Camel for a 21st Century audience," said Attorney General Connors. "By misrepresenting nicotine content and by presenting their products as healthy alternatives to cigarettes, they deceived the public and created a new generation of nicotine addicts."

Nicotine addiction among Hawai'i children, caused by the rise of e-cigarettes, is alarmingly high—2017 data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows that Hawai'i has the highest vaping rate among middle schoolers and the second highest among high schoolers in the nation. After years of hard-fought battles between states and the tobacco industry led to significant reductions in the consumption of tobacco by children, e-cigarette corporations, through predatory and deceptive marketing, have caused many of today's teenagers to

become addicted to nicotine and produced grave problems in the medical community, our schools and our families.

The complaint alleges that JUUL, Altria, and certain executives and directors engaged in unfair and deceptive acts and practices and additionally asserts claims for unjust enrichment, negligence, and public nuisance. The State seeks civil penalties of up to \$10,000 per violation and damages, including punitive damages. The State also seeks an injunction requiring the defendants to, among other things, halt their deceptive advertising practices and fund mitigation programs, including vaping-cessation programs.

The State is being represented by the Honolulu law firm Starn O'Toole Marcus & Fisher, and the national law firm Lieff Cabraser Heimann & Bernstein, LLP, who have been appointed to serve as special deputy attorneys general in this matter.

A copy of the complaint can be found [here](#).

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