

JULY 9th Marked True End to Hawaii Legislative Session

Although the 2019 Hawaii legislative session officially adjourned on May 2, July 9 marked the date by when Governor David Ige needed to sign bills into law, veto bills, or allow bills to become law without his signature. It wasn't until the governor vetoed bills that the House and Senate could decide whether or not to convene a special session to override any of the vetoed bills. Of the numerous anti-tobacco bills that were tracked by HPMA, S.B. 1405 was the lone measure that was enrolled to the governor. Even then, S.B. 1405 was eventually vetoed. Of the 20 anti-tobacco bills and 23 minimum wage-increase bills that were introduced this session, none survived. However, two bills that were enacted into law remain under close watch by HPMA:

- **H.B. 852 (Act 122)** – This bill established a new State Energy Office and a Chief Energy Officer position under the Hawaii Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism. A major change is that although the State Energy Office remains under DBEDT, it is only for administrative purposes, and the DBEDT director is no longer the State Energy Coordinator. Additionally, Act 122 provides funds for a study on carbon pricing.

- **H.B. 314 (Act 236)** – The measure requires a gift certificate issuer to redeem the remaining value of the certificate for cash if the certificate has a balance of less than \$5. This creates several operational challenges for retailers. Interestingly, the bill was locked in conference committee with the House disagreeing with the Senate's amendments. In the waning hours of the Legislature, on adjournment day to be exact, the House agreed to the Senate's version and the bill was quietly enrolled to Gov. Ige for signature.

On balance, the legislative session was productive. Outgoing HPMA President Jim Yates commended members for investing the necessary time to address a multitude of legislative issues this session. [See "By the Numbers" section.]

"There were many duplicative bills this year that required us to methodically review each bill," Jim noted. "With the benefit of our members' input, HPMA's lobbyists developed strategies and tactics that enabled us to effectively weigh-in on those measures."

The 2019 session was the first in a biennial legislature. Bills that were deferred this session will automatically carry over to next year's session.

By the Numbers

With a legislative session that is only four months long, Hawaii lawmakers are indeed under pressure to enact legislation. Final bill tallies below reflect a less than 10% success rate for legislators:

Bills introduced

by the state House of Representatives 1,597

Bills introduced by the state Senate 1,545

Bills enrolled

to the governor for signature..... 304

Bills signed by the governor..... 270

Bills that became law

without the governor's signature 16

Total number

of bills enacted into law 286

Bills vetoed by Gov. Ige..... 1 8

Vetoed overridden

by the Legislature 0