

## New law signed: No tobacco sales under 21 in Hawaii County

December 20, 2013

**KEALAKEHE, Hawaii** – You will soon have to be at least 21 years old to buy tobacco products on Hawaii Island.

On Thursday at the West Hawaii Civic Center, Mayor Billy Kenoi signed into law Bill 135, raising the legal age for tobacco purchases – including e-cigarettes. The mayor was joined by Kona Councilmember Dru Mamo Kanuha, who introduced the bill, and representatives from the Coalition for Tobacco-Free Hawai'i. Also present were Kealakehe High School students who advocated for the measure.

Hawaii County Council unanimously passed Bill 135, nine to zero on November 20.

The mayor and the councilman were quoted in a media release issued Thursday afternoon:

*Mayor Kenoi, Dec. 19, 2012* “I signed this bill for the benefit of our community, and most importantly, our kids. Mahalo to Councilman Kanuha for hearing their voices and having the courage to follow through. With all of the known harmful effects of tobacco use, this measure is in the best interest of public health and safety.”

*Dru Kanhua, Dec. 19, 2013* “My commitment is to help our young people live longer and healthier lives than the generation who came before them, and to improve the overall health of our island.”

According to the county:

*The ordinance will take effect on July 1, 2014 and will exempt people who reach the age of 18 before that date. Any person who distributes tobacco or electronic cigarette products to an underage customer will be subject to a fine of up to \$2,000.*

*Nearly 1,200 Hawai'i residents die each year from diseases that can be attributed to smoking, according to CTFH. Of those, more than 90 percent of them became daily tobacco users before the age of 18. For more information about the 21 reasons campaign, visit [twentyonereasons.org](http://twentyonereasons.org).*