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**THE HONORABLE JOSH GREEN, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES**

**Twenty-Ninth State Legislature
Regular Session of 2017
State of Hawai'i**

February 9, 2017

RE: S.B. 716; RELATING TO A PRE-ARREST DIVERSION PILOT PROJECT.

Chairs, Vice-Chairs, members of the Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs; Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection and Health; and Senate Committee on Human Services, the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney of the City and County of Honolulu (“Department”) submits the following testimony in support of S.B. 716.

The purpose of S.B. 716 is to establish a pre-arrest diversion pilot project that would apply to non-violent, non-felony offenses committed only on State lands, in which certain alleged violators would not be arrested initially, but rather sent to assessment for mental health or substance abuse challenges, and if qualified, offered treatment and services.

Although the Department’s primary role is to prosecute defendants after they commit an (alleged) offense, our main interest is public safety and welfare, and to the extent criminal offenses can be prevented or minimized—by assisting perpetrators to resolve any mental health, substance abuse or other personal challenges that lend to their violating the law—the Department is dedicated to exploring and/or expanding all effective methods of prevention. We applaud this “out of the box” initiative presented by S.B. 716, and believe it will complement the Community Outreach Courts Project that is currently being pursued on a county level.

For all of the foregoing reasons, the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney of the City and County of Honolulu supports S.B. 716. Thank for you the opportunity to testify on this bill.