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To the members of the Committee,

As a small business owner in the state of Maine, I'm incredibly frustrated to hear that you're considering banning flavored tobacco. This proposal is reckless and has the potential to devastate business owners and customers alike.

I take pride in offering a wide variety of goods and products, including tobacco products, to the customers in my community. People rely on my store just as much as I rely on their business to support my family.

Like most convenience store owners, tobacco products account for one-third of my inside sales. If you implement this flavor ban, you will be killing a majority of my tobacco sales since the majority of the moist snuff, and cigarettes I sell are flavored. I can't even imagine how this revenue hit would impact my store's ability to stay open. Any regulation that further attacks my sales will force me to take drastic action like laying off employees, raising prices, and possibly closing my doors for good—which puts an even greater burden on the state.

Massachusetts banned flavored tobacco products, and their retailers have seen a devastating decline in tobacco sales. And guess what people in Massachusetts are still buying flavored products - they are just buying them in other states like New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont. I'm worried that if you implement this ban, the same thing will happen to my store and other businesses here in Maine.

However, a ban will do more than just punish adult tobacco users here in Maine.

Consumers in the North East come to Maine to purchase tobacco products because of our business-friendly policies. If you implement this ban, citizens from our neighboring states will no longer bring their business to Maine. You might be thinking it will not impact our state in terms of the tourism dollars that pour in especially from June through September, but it will.

It baffles me that how during the pandemic the government recognized my store as an essential business because of the goods and services I provide my community. Now, it seems you've switched your tune and no longer value the sacrifice my employees make when showing up for work every day.

Please reconsider this reckless proposal and stand with Maine's small business owners, who have already undertaken a significant financial burden during this pandemic.

Sincerely,