

Rebecca Shepherd
Wild Oats Bakery / Brunswick
LD 1215

LD 1215: An Act To End the Sale of Flavored Tobacco Products
Becky Shepherd, Wild Oats
April 25, 2023

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and honorable members of the Joint
Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

My name is Becky Shepherd, I own and operate Wild Oats Bakery & Café in
Brunswick, and I'm a partner of Tobacco-Free Maine Works. I'm writing in favor of
LD 1215, an Act to End the Sale of Flavored Tobacco Products.

Wild Oats is a 32 year old, community centered business employing 85 full-time staff
and is open seven days a week. We produce and sell from-scratch food serving over a
thousand customers a day. If even one of our employees is out sick, it throws the
whole operation off balance. Smoking related health issues and absences have a huge
impact on my business. This past year I had a longtime, beloved employee undergo
major life-threatening surgery due to health related issues from smoking. Last month
she had additional surgery and is due for a third and fourth round next month. Lost
productivity, wages and medical bills have been crushing for both my employee and
my business. This story, and others I won't regale you with now, have had a direct
and detrimental impact on my business and reverberate into our larger community.

1 in 5 Maine high schoolers are currently using a tobacco product, and research shows
that flavored products like cherry e-cigarettes, menthol cigarettes and more attract and
hook kids [1]. In just a few short years, those high schoolers will be in our workforce.
And if they don't use tobacco products, they'll be healthier and more productive
employees.

I support ending the sale of all flavored tobacco products because it's the right thing
to do for our young people, and because it's an investment in a healthy workforce for
businesses like mine.

I urge you to vote ought to pass on LD 1215.

Sincerely,

Becky Shepherd
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