

Matt Dexter  
Bangor  
LD 1215

Hi, my name is Matt Dexter, and I am a proud Bangor resident.

A vote against LD 1215 is expecting more strength from a patient addicted to tobacco starting treatment for their lung cancer than the strength of an adult tobacco retailer.

A no-vote is expecting more resilience and courage from a vulnerable Bangor high school student, than the resilience and courage of an adult tobacco retailer.

A no-vote is expecting more creativity, resourcefulness, and hope from our health systems, schools, and community organizations combating the effects of tobacco, than the resourcefulness of an adult tobacco retailer.

\$190 million is a large amount for Maine to receive in tobacco settlements and taxes. But, it's nothing compared to the over \$800 million in Maine smoking-related health care costs annually. 30% of which comes from taxpayer dollars, including you and everyone on this committee.

Believe in yourself. Imagine the mortality rates of cancer declining. Imagine less of your taxes going to a preventable disease.

I believe in these retailers and their employees. I don't trust the product. That's all this is about.

This is our chance to apply decades of cancer research. We know 24% of cancers are avoidable, caused by tobacco and smoking. In Maine, that is over 2,000 of our neighbors. Your constituents, friends, family, and children, hearing that the tobacco product they understood our government endorsed as safe, resulted in a cancer diagnosis. This can change, with your vote.

A no-vote on LD 1215 will be a notorious mistake. Please do not amend LD 1215. Do not postpone this vote. Do not let fear and big tobacco influence what you know will not only improve the health of our state but reduce public healthcare costs. Of which, far outweigh the burden taxpayers are carrying.

Please ask yourself who you're putting the strength, courage, and resilience on, and vote yes on LD 1215.

Thank you.

Matt Dexter