

Testimony in support of LD 210
Sarah Fisher, MPH, resident of Orrs Island, ME
February 3, 2025

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, Senator Grohoski, Representative Cloutier, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation:

My name is Sarah Fisher, MPH, and I am an Orrs Island resident and a public health professional with over eight years of experience in the public health sector. I am submitting testimony in favor of the tobacco tax increase that's included in LD 210.

Maine's overall cancer rate is the highest in New England¹, and one of the most common newly diagnosed cancers in Maine is lung cancer². Research shows that people who use tobacco are 15-30x more likely to develop lung cancer than those who don't smoke³, and nearly 9 out of 10 adults who smoke cigarettes daily first tried smoking by age 18⁴.

I grew up during a time when smoking cigarettes was considered “cool” in the media I consumed, from the television shows and movies I watched to the books that I read. I am thankful that I never was pressured or presented with the opportunity to smoke, but I have a couple of friends who were not as lucky. Smoking tobacco is something they have struggled with long into adulthood.

Raising the tobacco tax is a proven strategy for reducing youth tobacco use⁵. Raising the excise tax on cigarettes from \$2 per pack to \$3 per pack will help ensure that Maine youth and young adults become healthy and thriving members of their communities, free from addiction.

I urge you to vote ought to pass on the tobacco tax included in LD 210.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Fisher
8 Tidewater Ln
Apt 3
Orrs Island, ME 04066

¹ U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Cancer Mortality by State.” Accessed 1/31/2025.

https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/sosmap/cancer_mortality/cancer.htm

² Maine Cancer Registry, “2024 Maine Cancer Snapshot.” Accessed 1/31/2025.

<https://www1.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/public-health-systems/data-research/vital-records/mcr/reports/documents/Maine%202024%20Annual%20Cancer%20Snapshot%20081524%20.pdf>

³ U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Lung Cancer Risk Factors.” Accessed 1/31/2025.

<https://www.cdc.gov/lung-cancer/risk-factors/index.html>

⁴ U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Youth and Tobacco Use.” Accessed 1/31/2025.

<https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/php/data-statistics/youth-data-tobacco/index.html>

⁵ Hawkins SS, Bach N, Baum CF. Impact of Tobacco Control Policies on Adolescent Smoking. *J Adolesc Health*. 2016;58(6):679-685. doi:10.1016/j.jadohealth.2016.02.014