

Testimony in Support of LD 1519  
An Act to Create a Stewardship Program for Electronic Smoking Devices and Related Products  
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Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera and distinguished members of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, my name is Heidi Sanborn, and I am testifying in favor of LD 1519 today on behalf of the National Stewardship Action Council (NSAC). (NSAC) is a 501(c)(4) non-profit organization comprised of governments, non-government organizations, businesses, and consumers with the vision for the United States to attain a responsible, circular economy, an economic system that designs out waste and pollution, keeps materials in use powering our economy as domestic feedstock for local manufacturing, and regenerates natural systems.

I'm here today in strong support of this legislation to establish a producer-funded stewardship program for single-use vapes—products that are creating serious problems across the country.

Disposable vapes contain lithium-ion batteries, which, when improperly discarded, pose a major fire hazard. These devices are catching fire in garbage trucks, recycling facilities and landfills. According to fire detection equipment supplier Fire Rover, in 2024, publicly reported fires at waste and recycling facilities in the U.S. and Canada rose to 430, marking a 15% increase from the previous year. A growing number of these fires are linked to improperly discarded lithium-ion batteries—especially from single-use vapes—which can ignite when crushed or damaged during waste processing.

But it's not just about fires. These vapes are poorly designed for end of life and have increased problems and costs for our waste management systems. They are what I call a “horrible hybrid” of plastic, metal, a battery, and a fluid either cannabis or the acutely toxic tobacco and often end up as litter—turning up in parks, beaches, and storm drains. They leach heavy metals, residual nicotine, and other pollutants into our soil and waterways, making them hazards to public health. And they waste critical materials. The lithium thrown away in these devices each year could power thousands of electric vehicles.

Most consumers don't realize they can't toss these in the recycling or trash bin and in California, we sponsored and passed AB 1894 (Rivas) in 2022 California to stop the false disposal labeling claims on cannabis vapes. Until then, we were finding vapes labeled “truly disposable”, whatever that means, and determined we needed to make it clear they could not be thrown in the trash and must be labeled “A spent cannabis cartridge shall be properly disposed of as hazardous waste at a household hazardous waste facility or other approved facility”

However, that is just cannabis in CA. Nationally, there's no consistent end-of-life labeling protocol or collection system, so local governments, taxpayers and sanitation workers are left to deal with the mess—and pay the price.

That's why this bill is so important. It puts the responsibility where it belongs- on the producers who make the design and marketing decisions. A stewardship program would create a safe, statewide collection system, reduce fire risks, and protect our sanitation workers, facilities and environment.

I encourage you to consider two additional options:

- **Pair this program with a ban on single-use vapes.** There is no need to sell disposable vapes. A sales ban, coupled with a stewardship program to manage reusable vapes, would be the most comprehensive strategy and single-use vapes are more affordable to children and designed for disposal, which we want to avoid in general. California has AB 762 moving to do just that and they were already banned in the UK.
- **Explore a household hazardous waste stewardship framework.** Vermont passed the first EPR for all HHW in the US and in California, we're sponsoring Senate Bill 501 to do the same which includes vape devices, lithium batteries, gas cylinders, pool chemicals, and other toxic products.

I appreciate your leadership on this issue and the opportunity to testify and am happy to serve as a resource.