

April 23, 2025

Good Afternoon Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera and members of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources. I am Owen Casas and on behalf of the Maine Vapors Association am providing testimony, *neither for or against*, on LD 1519 “An Act to Create a Stewardship Program for Electronic Smoking Devices and Related Products”.

We appreciate the intent of Rep. Gremlich’s bill and do have questions/ concerns about it, as written. We have already been collaborating with others on a product stewardship framework and would respectfully ask that LD 1519 be “carried over” to the 132nd Legislature’s 2nd Regular Session. We believe this will give time for relevant stakeholders to continue collaborating on options the committee/ legislature can consider next year. This should align relatively well with the timeline Maine DEP submitted to this committee, on this subject, during their recent annual report.

I am happy to answer questions and/ or express our perspective on product stewardship.

Below are questions and thoughts relevant to consideration of LD 1519.

If the batteries contained within the e-cigarette device is the primary concern needing stewardship, why separate e-cigarettes in its own program? Wouldn’t a consumer battery stewardship program, which would include e-cigarettes, have a greater positive impact on achieving the states waste management goals?

Title 38, chpt 16, §1610 addresses “electronic waste” and reads (in part) “The Legislature further finds that a system of shared responsibility for the collection and recycling of covered electronic devices among manufacturers, consolidators, municipalities and other parties is the most effective and equitable means of achieving the purposes of this section.”

- Considering “electronic waste” covers a range of items (from “video game console” through “cathode ray tubes” for example), I believe precedent indicates consideration of a more broad approach to stewardship then narrowly addressing e-cigarettes.

I have heard folks from Maine to California who support vape prohibitions state the following: you cannot remove the batteries from “disposable” e-cigarettes. Although I agree some vape devices require an inordinate technical expertise and equipment to remove a small button cell battery, most “electronic smoking devices” (disposable or otherwise) can be easily disassembled to remove the battery.

- As referenced above, §1610 also acknowledges and defines “Recycling and dismantling facility”. So precedent indicates an understanding that some “electronic waste” needs to be dismantled before it can complete the recycling process.
- To test this, I purchased a very popular “single-use, disposable” e-cigarette (Geek Bar). With just my pocket knife and a YouTube video, I was able to disassemble the device and remove the battery in under one minute.

Respectfully submitted,

Owen Casas