

Good afternoon Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and members of the committee,

My name is Anthony Scott and I'm the owner of a small vape shop chain that's been serving my community for the past 7 years. I'm here today to speak in strong opposition to LD1519, the *Act to Create a Stewardship Program for Electronic Smoking Devices and Related Products*.

To be clear, I care about the environment and I believe it's a noteworthy cause, but this bill, as written, places an unfair and unrealistic burden on small business owners like me — people who are doing everything we can to run honest, responsible operations and places the future of our business into the hands of large corporations with the infrastructure to carry out this large ask from the State in order to sell their products.

This bill sounds good on paper: creating a recycling program for electronic smoking devices. But in practice, it's a logistical and financial nightmare. Most of us aren't large corporations. We don't manufacture these products — we sell them. Requiring us to collect used devices, manage hazardous waste, and participate in a stewardship program designed by bureaucrats or big tobacco with little understanding of how our business works is not just unfair — it's unsustainable.

This bill doesn't level the playing field; it tilts it steeply in favor of corporate giants, while small shops like mine get crushed under the weight of regulation as the products, we sell become banned.

I also want to highlight the unintended consequences. Customers rely on shops like mine to help them transition away from traditional cigarettes. I've seen people change their lives — people who've tried everything to quit smoking and finally found something that works. But if bills like this drive small vape businesses out of the market, where will those people turn? Back to the convenience store, back to Big Tobacco, back to the products we all agree are far worse.

If environmental concerns are truly the issue, then we need a broader, more inclusive solution — one that applies to all electronics and batteries, not just vapes. Placing the burden on one industry to develop a program isn't fair when there is a broader issue at hand. The solution should be built with the future in mind. A solution found by a cooperative collaboration between State and Industry.

I'm asking for the State to continue working with groups like ours that represent local independents, bringing good ideas and reasonable solutions through the Maine Vapers Association. Please don't let this bill become another example of good intentions paving the way to unintended harm. I ask that you keep small businesses in mind when considering this bill and not put this into the hands of big tobacco.

Thank you for your time — and for listening to the voices of small business owners like me.

Anthony Scott

Portland Smoke and Vape