



**Testimony of Maine Public Health Association Neither For Nor Against:  
LD 754, An Act to Ban the Sale, Use and Possession of Single-use Electronic Cigarettes and to  
Review Extended Producer Responsibility Options for All Batteries**

Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources  
Room 216, Cross Building  
Monday, May 12, 2025

Good morning, Senator Tepler, Representative Gramlich, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources. My name is Rebecca Boulos. I am a resident of South Portland, and executive director of Maine Public Health Association.

MPHA is the state's oldest, largest, and most diverse association for public health professionals. We represent more than 850 individual members and nearly 70 organizations across the state. MPHA works to optimize the health of people and places in Maine through advocacy, education, partnerships, and public health workforce development. We are not tied to a national agenda, which means we are responsive to the needs of Maine's communities, and we take that responsibility seriously.

MPHA is Neither For Nor Against LD 754, "An Act to Ban the Sale, Use and Possession of Single-use Electronic Cigarettes and to Review Extended Producer Responsibility Options for All Batteries." We want to thank Senator Bennett, Representative Gramlich, and the bill's other co-sponsors for uplifting the important public health issue of hazardous waste from tobacco products.

There are more than 15,000 flavored tobacco products on the market, including Rocky Road-flavored cigars and mint and menthol combustible cigarettes. The advent of electronic smoking devices, which use nicotine-containing cartridges, has contributed to the growing problem of waste from tobacco products. Flavored e-cigarettes come in packaging that looks like regular school supplies, including USB drives, highlighters, and pens. Newer products include a video game console in the smoking device.

Tobacco products harm the environment. A [2022 report](#), published by the World Health Organization (WHO), found that the tobacco industry's CO2 emissions are equivalent to one-fifth of the airline industry's carbon emissions, a significant contributor to climate change. The WHO report also emphasized that cigarette filters, which contain microplastics, are the second-highest form of plastic pollution worldwide.

Waste from electronic smoking devices is particularly harmful to the environment because it introduces plastic, nicotine salts, heavy metals, lead, mercury, and flammable lithium-ion batteries into waterways, soil, and to wildlife. E-cigarette waste doesn't biodegrade even under severe conditions. Instead, it eventually breaks down into microplastics and chemicals that flow into storm drains and pollute our waterways and wildlife.

Many popular electronic smoking devices are pod-based with single-use plastic cartridges. These products have skyrocketed in popularity with a 1,000% increase in use among high school students between 2019 and 2020; they remained the most commonly used tobacco product reported in 2021. A [2022 investigative report](#) found that in the U.S., young people throw away five disposable vapes every second. Over the course of a year, that equals 150 million devices, which contain enough lithium to power 6,000 Teslas.

Unlike other electronics, e-cigarette manufacturers do not provide consumers with clear instructions on how to properly handle the e-waste once the device or its accessories reaches the “end of life.” They leave the onus of figuring out how to safely dispose of the waste to the consumer, which is how they end up in all sorts of places. [E-cigarettes are considered hazardous waste and regulated by the Resource Conservation & Recovery Act](#) (RCRA). E-liquids/e-juices with nicotine are RCRA hazardous waste (nicotine is an acute hazardous waste (P075), listed for toxicity). Lithium-ion batteries are considered RCRA hazardous waste as both ignitable hazardous waste (D001) and reactive hazardous waste (D003).

Currently, there is no standardized way to recycle electronic smoking devices in the U.S. There are no documented baseline standards for end-of-life disposal by manufacturers, and no requirement to hold manufacturers accountable for the post-consumer waste they helped produce or to devise a clear and safe system to dispose of these items as hazardous materials or electronic waste. According to a [Bangor Daily News](#) report, the only two hazardous waste collection sites in Maine “do not accept e-cigarettes because they have no way to dispose of them.”

Given this context, addressing the significant issue of electronic tobacco product waste is a priority for MPHA. We would support a request to carry this bill over so that we have more time to talk with other stakeholders. We remain committed to identifying and advancing strategies that reduce human and environmental health harms from these highly addictive, toxic products. Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.



Bangor Public Health 2022



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New York Post 2024



CBS News 2023