



TESTIMONY of Charlie Summers  
President/CEO  
Maine Energy Marketers Association

**BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
In Opposition of LD 1215  
*An Act to End the Sale of Flavored Tobacco Products***

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and members of the Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Charlie Summers, I am the President and CEO of the Maine Energy Marketers Association (MEMA).

We represent more than 300 members who own and operate 70% of Maine's 1,300 convenience stores

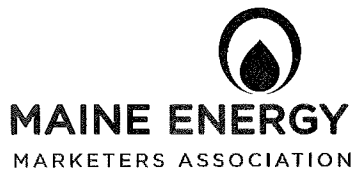
While we and our members appreciate the intent of LD 1215, we are opposed to this bill.

For years, our members have been integral contributors to the economic well-being of the state of Maine and its communities where they operate. They provide a wide array of products and services that strive to maintain everyday conveniences for consumers, employ hard-working members of the communities, and participate in charitable activities in their towns. Maine convenience stores provide daily food products, sodas, candy, personal necessities, alcohol, snacks, fuel, and tobacco and vapor products. Each product is an important component to their stores' viability to not only survive but to grow.

According to the National Association of Convenience Stores, tobacco sales account for 37.8% of all in-store sales. It is a significant contributor to a convenience store's business, which is being increasingly threatened by a growing patchwork of different local tobacco ordinances being passed in this state.

When the local flavor bans were enacted in Brunswick and Portland on June 1, 2022, adult tobacco consumers simply purchased their flavored tobacco in neighboring cities where such products remain legal. In Brunswick, cigarette volume in stores has decreased by 17%, while it increased by over 23% in neighboring stores located in Topsham. Similarly, volume in Portland also shifted to neighboring stores in Westbrook and Falmouth where cigarettes sales increase by over 11%. As you can see, these local flavor bans are only punishing law abiding retailers in localities where they are enacting these flavor bans.

Our members are responsible, state-licensed retailers who comply with federal law and only sell tobacco to adults after confirming their age of 21 or older with proper ID. They are already doing their part by making sure youth cannot buy tobacco in their stores because it is illegal to sell to anyone under 21. The greater issue that needs to be addressed is the internet sales of kid-enticing flavors that can be delivered right to the homes of youth, without anyone ever physically checking an ID and enforcement.



We ask this Committee to oppose LD 1215 and protect Maine retailers across this state.

Thank you for your time and consideration.