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*Testimony of Rep. Poppy Arford supporting*

**LD 1215, An Act to End the Sale of Flavored Tobacco Products**

*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services*

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer and respected colleagues of the Health and Human Services Committee, I am Poppy Arford, Representative of District 101 in Brunswick. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of **LD 1215, An Act to End the Sale of Flavored Tobacco Products**.

I am speaking with you today as a legislator, yet also as a mother of two now-adult children, a former registered substance abuse provider of addiction treatment services to young people, and as someone who cares deeply about the health and wellbeing of young people statewide.

On April 19, 2022 the municipal leaders of Brunswick voted to adopt an ordinance banning the sale of flavored tobacco products. The wording of the ordinance included the following:

*“Brunswick has a substantial interest in protecting the health and safety of its residents, including the youth of the community, from dangerous products such as tobacco - that tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable death in the U.S., killing more than 480,000 Americans each year, including 2,400 in Maine - that according to the Surgeon General, nicotine can harm the parts of the adolescent brain responsible for attention, learning, mood, and impulse control, and can prime the brain for addiction to other drugs.”*

I attended the public hearing and heard firsthand accounts from community members, including our Brunswick High School substance abuse counselor, superintendent, impacted students, parents and our pediatric care providers. It was clear that the public health crisis presented by youth flavored tobacco use is a very real and present danger here in Maine.

In a recent conversation concerning flavored tobacco with Brunswick’s assistant superintendent, he offered the following statement for this testimony: “Vaping continues to be a significant issue for our young people with health effects we are only beginning to understand. I applauded the Town of Brunswick last year for banning flavored tobacco products, which are clearly designed for our younger citizens. But these products are still widely available. We need a statewide ban to firmly shut the door on flavored tobacco.”

I stand before you today to ask that you vote to do just that; “shut the door” by prohibiting the sale of flavored tobacco products in Maine.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony. I am happy to answer questions.

**SOURCES:**

Flavored Tobacco Ban Ordinance – Adopted in Brunswick, Maine on 4/19/22

<https://www.brunswickme.org/DocumentCenter/View/6459/Flavored-Tobacco-Ban-Ordinance-Adoption-Effective-6-1-2022>