

My name is Christine Peters. I am the Chief operating officer of The Maine Smoke Shops an employee-owned company. I am here today to STRONGLY object to another tax increase on cigarettes and here is why.

For my customers who are largely blue-collar lower income people who are already up against it. They are already having to make very tough choices when it comes to daily life. Many people live paycheck to paycheck. With the current climate I think we can all agree that things are going to get even harder.

Inflation- The cigarette companies have increased costs as has every other industry. To just ask for an extra dollar is ridiculous.

For my business

It has been extremely challenging to operate any business in these current conditions, yet I have had to find a way to go up on minimum wage and be competitive. Pay for my employees to have Maine Paid leave

And I worried about losing customers to New Hampshire. If this would pass New Hampshire tax rate would be almost half of what Maine is

New Hampshire would 1.78 compared to 3.00 ME

Vape would 65% vs 8% NH

I think we need to cut spending instead of raising taxes on groups of individuals that are already struggling

Thank you for your time and consideration

Christine Peters