

Eben Francis
Indian Island

LD 1550: An Act To End the Sale of Flavored Tobacco Products
Testimony of Eben Francis Indian Island, Penobscot Nation
May 7, 2021

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services: my name is Eben Francis, I live on Indian Island, in Penobscot Nation and I am here today to testify in favor of LD 1550, An Act To End the Sale of Flavored Tobacco Products.

In today's world Nicotine and tobacco products are everywhere. According to truthinitiative.org 16.1% of American Indian and Alaska Native middle schoolers use e-cigarettes. As if that statistic wasn't large enough 40.4% of American Indian and Alaska native high school students use e-cigarettes. I am 13 years old and am from the Penobscot Nation. In Penobscot culture we use tobacco as a way to give thanks. It is sad to see something of cultural significance be used to exploit young people. Even as a 13 year old I know people my age who have used e-cigarettes or tobacco products. Nicotine and tobacco companies use these flavors and fun names to attract kids and use nicotine as an additive. This clearly shows that we are being targeted which is scary for many reasons. For one the risks of nicotine aren't taken seriously or hardly even known, making teens think that there will be no effect which makes e-cigarettes even more popular in teen culture. Another reason this is very scary is that vaping can become a gateway to tobacco and worse products creating even more health hazards and life long addictions for teens. As e-cigarettes become more popular the danger increases as they will be easier to get. However there are things people can do. Stores need to do a better job at restricting underage tobacco and e-cigarette purchases and schools can educate more on the effects of tobacco and e-cigarettes and the chemicals inside of them.

The health and wellbeing of the next seven generations is our future, but flavored tobacco products are luring and hooking another generation. It's time to end the sale of flavored tobacco, keep tobacco sacred. Please vote 'yes' on LD 1550.

Woliwon,
Eben Francis