



CIGAR ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, INC.

May 7, 2021

**Senator Ned Claxton, Chair
Representative Michele Meyer, Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
209 Cross Office Building
3 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333**

Honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services,

The Cigar Association of America is a non-profit national trade organization representing the interests of cigar manufacturers, importers, distributors, and major suppliers of the cigar industry. CAA is the premier voice of the cigar industry in the United States.

CAA is troubled by efforts to remove flavored cigars from the market, and respectfully urge you to oppose L.D. 1550, "An Act to End the Sale of Flavored Tobacco Products".

The CAA is adamantly opposed to youth usage of cigars and piper tobacco. We have adopted practices to curb usage in adolescents, such as working with retailers to use "We Card" services and tailoring our advertising to adult audiences only. These practices have been successful, and youth usage rates of cigars are now at an all-time low. Consider:

Youth Usage of Cigars Is Low, and Continues to Be Lower than Other Similar Products

- The 2019 Maine Youth Risk Behavior Survey reported that in 2019:¹
 - 5.0% of Maine high school students reported current cigar use
- In contrast, the 2019 Maine Youth Risk Behavior Survey reported that in 2019:
 - 30.2% of Maine high school students reported current e-cigarette use
 - 22.3% of Maine high school students reported current marijuana use ; and
 - 22.7% of Maine high school students reported current alcohol use

We strongly believe that a flavorings ban such as this would do very little, if anything, to keep cigars out of the hands of Maine's youth, and instead would only punish small businesses in the cigar industry and dramatically limit the choices of adult cigar consumers. This very clearly would send Maine consumers to neighboring states for the purchase of legal products.

Banning the Sale of Flavored Tobacco Products to Adults will Have Dramatic Consequences on Maine Tax Revenues

- Massachusetts banned the sale of all flavored tobacco products as of May 2020

¹ All data is based on use on at least one day in the past 30 days at the time of the survey.

- Cigarette tax stamp revenues show that, comparing June – September 2019 to June – September 2020, the ban had a large impact on tax revenue, but not on curbing use of menthol cigarettes²
 - Massachusetts tax stamp revenue **declined** 24%
 - New Hampshire tax stamp revenue **increased** 34%
 - Vermont tax stamp revenue **increased** 11%
 - Rhode Island tax stamp revenue **increased** 25%
- In fiscal year 2020, Maine tobacco excise taxes were approximately 143 million dollars³

Maine and the Federal Government have Raised the Minimum Age of Purchase of Tobacco Products to 21

- Former U.S. Senate Majority Leader McConnell has stated that “we introduced legislation that would accomplish something very important: Raise the minimum age for purchasing tobacco and vapor products to 21, nationwide. We want to put a huge dent in these pathways to childhood addiction and help get these products out of high schools altogether.”⁴

Finally, just last week the FDA announced its intention to issue a proposed product standard seeking to ban all characterizing flavors in cigars. The proposed product standard will be subject to comment, which CAA will engage in. CAA and its member companies have demonstrated by work and deed agreement with FDA that tobacco is an adult product and that minors should not use any tobacco product, and the continuing year-over-year decreases in youth usage of cigars shows the effectiveness of the tools already available to reduce youth usage.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,



Chris Jackson

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² <https://taxfoundation.org/massachusetts-flavored-tobacco-ban/>

³ <https://taxfoundation.org/maine-tobacco-tax-vaping/#:~:text=According%20to%20U.S.%20Census%20figures,more%20revenue%20than%20%2417%20million.>

⁴ [McConnell-Kaine Tobacco-Free Youth Act Advances to Senate Floor](#) | Press Release | June 27, 2019