

May 7, 2021

Distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health & Human Services:

**I am writing to support LD 1550, “An Act to End the Sale of Flavored Tobacco Products.”** I retired as Associate Dean for Research at the Westbrook College of Health Professions, University of New England. Before that position, I served as Lead Evaluator for the Healthy Maine Partnerships and the Partnership for a Tobacco-Free Maine. Thus, I am well aware of the evidence.

We have a serious epidemic of tobacco addiction! Among adults in my county (Waldo) the smoking rate is 20.9%. Most smokers start before age 21 – the tobacco industry calls youth their “replacement” smokers. So, to address this problem effectively, it is urgent to prevent youth from ever starting to smoke.

Yet, the most recent Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey reveals an alarming increase in young people using e-cigarettes (such youth are twice as likely to take up smoking cigarettes):

- In 2017: 15.3%
- In 2019: 28.7%

The industry has over 15,000 products designed to appeal to youth, through candy and fruit flavors, and colorful packaging.

Ending the sale of flavored tobacco products by enacting LD 1550 will also promote health equity, given the tobacco industry’s notorious targeting of vulnerable populations and communities of color.

Please support this critical legislation. Thank you.

Best regards,



Allison C. Morrill, JD, PhD