

Karen Norberg
Portland

Honorable Members of the Health and Human Services Committee:

Now is not only the wrong time for the State of Maine to burden our state's retail and wholesale industries with a menthol ban – it is the worst time. LD 1550 is a proposed ban on menthol cigarettes, which comprise nearly a third of all cigarette sales in America, would adversely affect the wholesale and retail industries in Maine.

While the ban would bring devastation to those of us that are gainfully employed here in Maine, it would also bring a boom to illegal trafficking, as well as to the coffers of our foreign competitors who produce black market inventory. As ATF reports, cigarettes are currently the “number-one black market commodity in the world.” With an infrastructure already well-established, illicit tobacco networks – whose product contains higher levels of tar, carbon monoxide, and other toxic contaminants – would be well-prepared to respond rapidly to the State of Maine's incentive.

For these critical reasons, I strongly urge you to help prevent the unintended consequences of a menthol ban.

Thank you.

Karen Norberg
Dyer's Variety Store, Manager