

Dear Health and Human Services Committee,

Thank you for taking the time to read my email and for your consideration. My name is Anthony Scott, and I am a local business owner with three locations in Maine. I am writing regarding LD1693. This bill will have a substantial impact on my business. It will impact the livelihood of myself and my 15 employees. I would like to urge you to oppose Part D of this legislation which would ban the sale of flavored tobacco products.

Over the past several years I have spoken in front of your committee regarding flavored tobacco bans and followed the legislation that would have a direct impact on my business. Every year there seems to be a compromise that is agreeable by all sides but then another bill comes the following year to try to completely end the sale of flavored products which would have a substantial impact on my business. From the first flavor ban attempts there seemed to be consensus that there should be regulatory action that mirrors alcohol laws, and that seems reasonable given the attractiveness to youth some of the flavored products have. In Maine, we saw an age limit increase to 21, 43% tax on vape products, money allocated for education and awareness, shipping restrictions, and several other actions taken on the federal level from the FDA in an effort to curb youth vaping. From the most recent NIH study, "Monitoring the Future survey" <https://nida.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/2021/12/percentage-of-adolescents-reporting-drug-use-decreased-significantly-in-2021-as-the-covid-19-pandemic-endured>, it appears to have helped to lower the youth vaping rates which is exactly what this body set out to do. We understand how important it is to ensure we are doing everything possible to protect the health of the children in our community. We also need to consider the adult vapers that use these products as a harm reduction alternative. It is also important to consider youth and adults may switch to smoking cigarettes if these products are taken off the shelf.

It is very difficult to have a meaningful conversation on such a complex topic when it is attached to a bill like LD1693. LD 1550 was carried over from last session and this conversation would be better on its own. Please consider taking the flavored tobacco ban out of LD1693 and let the flavor ban conversation continue in the carry over bill LD1550.

I ask that you consider all the recent regulation that has been put in place to curb youth vaping and don't rush to ban a product that is showing declining trends of use by the youth. Please also consider what individuals that use flavored vape products will do if these products are taken off the shelf.

Members of the vaping community and stakeholders want to have a working relationship with legislators in Maine. Many of us believe there are further opportunities to help lower vaping rates of the youth in Maine while still allowing access to these less harmful products to adult users.

I appreciate your time and consideration. If there are any questions I could help clarify, I would be happy to do my best to try and answer them or find the answer for you. I welcome the opportunity for a more in-depth conversation.

Thank you

Anthony Scott

Portland Smoke and Vape