

Sokreth Yean
Portland, Maine
LD 1693

Dear Health and Human Services Committee,

My name is Sokreth Yean, I writing to you as a resident and small business operator in Portland, ME. My wife and I own Riverton Gas and Convenience which employs 4 Maine residents. I am not happy to hear that the state is considering raising all tobacco taxes and banning all flavored tobacco products.

The last two years have been very difficult on our business. The cost of payroll, products in my store, health mandates and utilities have already become big issues for us, and every day is a fight to keep our doors open. I believe we will make it through this, but right now is not the time to increase taxes or remove profitable products from our shelves that play such an important role in the success of my business. My business has never been more vulnerable, and we believe that the state should be focusing on more important issues during this extremely difficult financial time for so many.

In my store, over 50% of customers that come in purchase tobacco products. Not only do those customers purchase tobacco products, but they also purchase household items, lottery, snacks and more. If this bill passes, it will force many of my customers to find not only their tobacco products elsewhere but all their other convenience items. My customers will either travel to another state to make their purchases or will try and order their products online. This bill will hurt more than just the tobacco business of my store and the other 1900 retailers in the state.

I want to thank you for giving me time to speak and I urge you to vote against LD 1693.

Sincerely,
Sokreth Yean
Riverton Gas and Convenience
Portland, ME