

**To: Senator Laurie Monnes-Anderson**  
Senate Committee on Health Care  
February 18, 2020

**Re: HB 4078 - OSPIRG Testimony in Support**

Dear Chair Monnes-Anderson, Vice-Chair Linthicum, & Committee Members,

OSPIRG supports HB 4078, banning online and other remote sales of vaping devices. As a consumer advocacy organization, we have a long history of pushing for policies that promote public health and safety. That's why we're calling on you to take action to combat youth vaping through the passage of HB 4078.

The U.S. Surgeon General has declared e-cigarette use, commonly known as vaping, among young people an epidemic due to its popularity and health risks. In [2019 National Youth Tobacco Survey](#) one in four high school students reported vaping in the last thirty days. An entire generation is at risk of nicotine addiction, and millions of kids are already hooked on nicotine with serious implications for their health and future.

While health experts agree that e-cigarettes are less harmful than combustible cigarettes, the Surgeon General states that "any e-cigarette use among young people is unsafe." Vaping often delivers a highly addictive dose of nicotine, a drug that can impair brain development, impact learning, cause mood disorders, and increase the risk of future addiction to other dangerous substances when people are exposed to it in adolescence. Vaping is also a gateway to youth smoking: a meta-analysis of recent studies shows that young adults who vape are [three times](#) more likely than non-users to start smoking cigarettes.

To make matters worse, some studies have found that e-cigarette aerosol can contain lead, nickel, tin, benzene and diacetyl — chemicals linked to cancer, central nervous problems and lung disease.

Underage users can easily acquire vape devices and e-liquids online. Studies have found that youth can successfully purchase e-cigarettes online in 94 to 97 of their online attempts.<sup>1</sup> Many online retailers conduct minimal age-verification, with some simply requiring purchasers to check a box affirming that they are over age 18 or 21 to enter the website.

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<sup>1</sup> Williams, Et al, "Electronic cigarette sales to minors via the internet." *JAMA Pediatrics*, March 2, 2015.

The tobacco industry claims that flavored e-cigarettes play an important role helping established adult smokers switch or quit smoking. However, there is no credible evidence that vaping flavors actually helps adults quit. No e-cigarette manufacturer has ever even applied to the FDA with evidence that e-cigarettes can be an effective tobacco cessation measure. The potential benefit to the adults who claim to be using these flavored e-cigarettes to quit smoking simply doesn't outweigh the public health risk these products pose to America's young people.

Remote sales of traditional combustible and smokeless tobacco products are already banned in Oregon. HB 4078 will simply extend the same treatment to vape devices and e-liquids, making it more difficult for Oregon youth to purchase them. Given the failure of other proposals this year to restrict sales of kid-friendly vape flavors, it is even more urgent that we advance policies that will restrict youth access to vape products.

We urge you to help us end the nicotine trap by advancing HB 4078.

Respectfully Submitted,



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Health Care Advocate  
OSPIRG