



Taxpayers Association of Oregon

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3/21/23

No on Hb 3090

In person testimony to House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

For a variety of reasons, the Taxpayer Association of Oregon opposes efforts by local governments and the State government to ban flavored products.

1) Firstly, being able to switch to vaping helps people quit smoking tobacco. A study by the prestigious King's College of London found a 10 percent improvement in quitting rates over all other methods by using vaping. As many as 2/3 of smokers in the study were able to quit cigarettes and stay off them. Banning flavorings will make this method less effective as it will be harder for smokers to continue vaping if the only choices are flavors they don't like. We all want people to quit if they can – we should not be taking away tools that make it possible.

(2) It's important to remember that banning flavors is going to encourage and grow the illegal market for these products. In a recent poll by the unfortunately named Axis Research, fully 80 percent of Oregonians understood this ban would grow the black market. This illegal market is already estimated to provide 10 percent of all tobacco products. People will find what they want, and a market that doesn't have to care about things like safety or regulation is going to create more tragedies. I don't know about you, but I've pretty much had my fill of "died from counterfeit product containing fentanyl" headlines.

(3) This action will damage many small businesses in the State and could lead to the closure of "convenience" stores which in some neighborhoods are the only nearby source of groceries.

We urge a "No" vote on any proposal to ban flavored vaping products. Doing so will only ensure more people keep smoking tobacco, and harm legal businesses, reward illegal markets, create more smugglers and illegal, potentially even more dangerous products, and cost the State tax revenue.