

Submitter: Matthew Hill  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Commerce and Consumer Protection  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2528

I own two Vape shops and employ 8 (majority are full time employees) and I oppose HB 2528. The OHA should not be granted additional authority over the tobacco and vape industry. The OHA has shown itself to be biased against the vaping industry and it is clear they intend to do as much as possible to eliminate this as an option for Oregonian consumers.

Approximately 60% of my business is from selling vapes and vaping products to adults. If the OHA takes on additional authority and limits the ability to sell vapes and vaping products to adults, I will have to shut down operations and fire all of my staff. This will drive unemployment, negatively impact the economy and anger adult consumers.

Both of my stores are 21 and older stores that require IDs to be checked with every purchase, including everyone in your party. We take our responsibility of keeping vapes and nicotine products out of the hands of minors very seriously.

The OHA has shown itself to be incapable of managing the tobacco industry so far, granting it further authority would be a mistake. I just successfully concluded a court case against the OHA, where it was revealed that they do not follow their own internal policies, are unaware of what happens when their agents conduct inspections in the field and do not discipline their staff when they fail to follow policy. We have found that the OHA is unable to provide guidance and education to tobacco retailers and they create a hostile and unclear environment for retailers to try to comply and thrive. Granting them further authority should not happen.

It is concerning why the OHA seems to be so against the vape/tobacco industry, when the alcohol and even marijuana industries seem to be left alone. Alcohol is allowed to have products that are attractive to minors and have various flavors to choose from. Adults should be allowed to select variety in their smoking options, just as they are able to do with their alcohol options. Tobacco and vaping has been unfairly targeted, while other similar industries are not.

The Oregon tobacco tax collected in 2023 was over \$511 million. It seems unlikely that the OHA nor the state understands that eliminating vapes will reduce the tax revenue drastically. If my vape sales are approximately 60% of my smoke shop's revenue, it is likely similar for all vape/smoke shops. How will the OHA operate on a 60% reduction in tobacco tax revenue, much less take on more responsibility?

The vaping industry is not focused on attracting/selling to minors. 80% of my vape business is former smokers wanting to get away from traditional tobacco/cigarettes. This industry is not about attracting new, young customers, rather it is about providing alternatives to the adult consumer.

Granting further control to the OHA will be detrimental to adult consumers, tax revenues, business owners and employees. This measure should not be passed.