

Submitter: Johit Kumar  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Early Childhood and Behavioral Health  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB702

Dear Member of the Senate Committee On Early Childhood and Behavioral Health. My name is Johit Kumar. My family and I own operate Stop N Go, Smoke Point Retail, and Smoke Point Wholesale in Southern Oregon. Our wholesale business alone serves over 300 smoke shops/convenience stores in the state of Oregon.

Today I am expressing my strong opposition to Senate Bill 702, which seeks to ban flavored tobacco and nicotine in the state. I firmly believe this policy is misguided and will not achieve it's intended public health goals for the following reasons:

Reason 1: The latest data from Oregon's Student Health Survey shows that Oregon's youth are 5 times more likely to use alcohol and 3 times more likely to use marijuana than smoking e-cigarettes, which is already at historic national lows, especially for our youth.

Reason 2: Banning flavored tobacco & nicotine products will NOT address the broader issue of youth tobacco/nicotine use when the true problem is our youth retrieving these devices from friends, family members, etc. Banning these items will only promote an illicit market that will have no restrictions whatsoever, then resulting in even more exploitation. Take a fair look at the state of California, the sales of flavored products may seem low on paper according to data but the black market has no data online which is carrying the vape market as a whole itself, the same black market methods will be used in Oregon and the vape will go stay. At least this way, we can regulate who is buying our product. Punish the people who are selling to minors, punishing everyone that do follow the rules is NOT fair. I have a son who just turned 21, he was born in 2004, he has a variety of friends across the entire world born in 2004, 2005, 2006 and so forth which is the exact demographic whom you are attempting to "protect". My son himself has said all friends under the age of 21 are still getting flavored vape devices, in a easier way without showing ID, because how big the illicit market has grown. It sounds nice on paper to ban vapes, and yes on paper it may seem like this bill helped, but the black market that will be formed after this will be breathtaking, and the black market retailers have no license, no rules to follow, etc. You can regulate retailers and penalize minors or retailers that either have a vape or have sold a vape to a minor, but to ban it from the whole state is blasphemy.

Reason 3: Also, 40% of our sales come from flavored devices. With a drastic drop in sales, we would be forced to fire certain workers that depend on us for financial

stability. We have a total of 30 employees that depend on us in our community. Our annual contribution to our community along with donations, offering affordable housing to our employees and more, all of these factors we provide to our community will either be eliminated or plummeted due to sales dropping. This bill will damage every small business in the entire state and will cause the removal of thousands of jobs.

Reason 4: Lastly, if the state moves forward with this ban, Oregon would lose critical tax revenues that help fund essential healthcare program across the state such as the Oregon Health Plan. The loss would result in over hundreds of millions of dollars. While money is not the concern, I strongly advise you to take a look at the resources that would be lost with this type of money. The data stated in Reason 1 has proven how the use of alcohol in our youth has significantly inclined while the use of flavored tobacco has decreased. In summary, these bill would not only promote the illicit market, but will also result in the loss of hundreds of millions of dollars, will result in the youth looking toward other harmful-fatal products. Along with this, the consumers who are the proper age to purchase these products use flavored devices to transition from regular cigarette, they will not be allowed to use a device that is proven to be better than cigarettes.