

Hello, my name is William Ackermann and I'm the co-owner of a Vape Shop called Paradox.

I'm here today to voice strong opposition to any proposed banning of flavored nicotine products. Adults overwhelmingly prefer flavors other than Tobacco, and Menthol is no exception.

Youth vaping rates are precipitously falling year over year, the FDA data shows a 1.8% reduction (half a million children) between 2023 and 2024 alone. Since the peak in 2019, the rate of reported youth e-cigarette use has fallen 70%.

Harm reduction is the prevailing compassionate, progressive and modern approach to combating the harms associated with addictive compounds. Vaping is no exception, in fact, it's the best example of successful harm reduction in the 21st century.

Between 2005 (a year before e-cigarettes were invented) and 2022, adult smoking rates fell from an average of 23.9% of Men & 18.1% of Woman to a combined average of 11.2% of adults. Studies have found that adult smokers are 60% more likely to successfully quit using e-cigarettes than with conventional methods of the patches, gum, prescriptions, etc.

Prohibition has been a proven failure in every attempt. This bill would drive the legitimate, licensed, insured and accountable businesses from the sector, and carve out a lucrative black/grey market for industrious teens and young adults to capitalize on. One simply has to plan a trip to Vancouver and make a large purchase, then back to Oregon to sell the goods at inflated street pricing, thanks to prohibition. Or just go direct to one of the China based online retailers. They don't require age verification upon delivery, and don't have any risk of prosecution.

On top of all, Oregon as a state stands to lose 100's of millions in tobacco tax revenue if this bill goes through. A 65% wholesale tax was levied on our industry in 2021, along with a legal purchasing age increase. It's already illegal for teens to buy or use these products, and the previous/current initiatives seem to be working. Why punish retailers who follow the rules, reduce harm, and pay taxes?

Thank You for your time, I invite any clarifying questions.