

Submitter: PAUL MAROKE

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB702

I am writing to express my strong opposition to Senate Bill 702. As a small business owner who operates a licensed vape/smoke shop, I believe this bill could/will have devastating consequences not only for my livelihood, but also for my employees and customers.

1.) Severe Economic Impact on Small Businesses

Flavored products make up a significant portion of total sales for specialty tobacco retailers like me (roughly 70%). If SB 702 were to pass, my business would face immediate and unsustainable revenue losses. This could result in store closures, layoffs, and a ripple effect on local suppliers and service providers affecting the communities around all of us in multiple ways.

2.) Unintended Public Health Consequences

Many adult consumers use flavored vape and nicotine products as a way to control, reduce, minimize or quit smoking cigarettes. By removing access to flavored alternatives, SB 702 risks pushing these adults back toward more harmful tobacco use that contain too many addictive & harmful chemical additives, many that are way worse than anything a disposable vape device or e-liquid contain. A ban may also encourage unregulated, black market purchases- where safety, quality and age verification cannot be guaranteed.

3.) Existing Youth Protections are working

We all agree on protecting our youth. However, Oregon already has strong age restrictions and enforcements in place for all tobacco sales. Rather than punishing responsible, licensed retailers, we should invest in more robust enforcement and education. SB 702 overreaches by limiting adult choices and punishing compliant businesses.

4.) Local communities should not be penalized

SB 702 also opens door for local jurisdictions to enforce stricter rules, leading to inconsistent regulations and confusion across the state

If we're wanting to restrict who can and cannot sell these devices, they should be restricted to being sold in tobacco/smoke/vape shops only as these types of

businesses have an age requirement to shop in. Meaning the chances of an under the age person, who does not have access to shopping in these types of businesses, are slim to non compared to these products being readily available in your corner market or convenience stores, which do not have a minimum age requirement to shop in. Having these products only available in age restricted pre existing businesses (smoke/vape shops) makes the most amount of sense to not only myself, but also a great amount of other people.