

This proposed legislation, cloaked in the guise of consumer protection, presents a serious threat to public health, economic stability, and individual freedoms. It's imperative we recognize this bill for what it is: a thinly veiled attempt by Big Tobacco to consolidate its market power and eliminate competition.

Firstly, the influence of Big Tobacco on this legislation is undeniable. Concerns about HB1441 echo across the nation, revealing a coordinated lobbying effort driven by the very industry that profited from the devastating consequences of cigarettes. To allow them to dictate the future of harm reduction alternatives is a profound conflict of interest.

Secondly, granting the Attorney General sole authority over vapor product approval is a dangerous overreach. This unchecked power, coupled with the bill's lack of transparent criteria and processes, opens the door to arbitrary decisions and potential bias. The high fees associated with product registration will effectively create a barrier to entry for smaller businesses, leaving only Big Tobacco with the resources to comply.

Thirdly, the legislation's ambiguity regarding product bans poses a significant risk to public health. The potential elimination of open system vapor products and low-nicotine options, particularly the popular 3mg nicotine level, would force consumers back to high-nicotine devices or even cigarettes. This directly contradicts the goal of harm reduction and will create a public health disaster.

Fourthly, the economic repercussions of this bill are substantial. The closure of small vape shops, the very businesses that provide personalized guidance and support to those seeking to quit smoking, will lead to job losses and a significant decline in state revenue, conservatively estimated at over \$100 million. Ironically, this legislation will empower convenience stores, the primary source of teen access to tobacco products, according to available data. Furthermore, a large black market will be created, as citizens will turn to online services and other states to obtain the products they want.

Finally, I want to add my personal testimony. As a former long-time smoker, I struggled for years to break free from nicotine addiction. Traditional methods, such as patches and gums, proved ineffective for me. It was only through vaping that I was finally able to successfully quit smoking. The ability to gradually reduce nicotine levels, coupled with the behavioral aspects of vaping, provided the crucial support I needed. I have now been completely nicotine-free for over a year, and I attribute this success directly to the availability of diverse vaping products. This legislation, which threatens to eliminate the very products that enabled my journey to a healthier life, is a direct assault on the choices and successes of countless individuals like myself. To deny others the same opportunity I had is not only unjust but also a profound disservice to public health.

In conclusion, this legislation is not about consumer protection; it's about protecting the profits of Big Tobacco. It's a misguided attempt to regulate a market that has shown promise in reducing smoking-related harm. We urge lawmakers to reject this harmful bill and instead focus on evidence-based policies that prioritize public health and economic well-being.

Respectfully, Derek Raymond Abbott