

Dear Members of the House Human Services Committee:

I would like to submit written testimony regarding Bill S0018 “An act relating to banning flavored tobacco products and e-liquids”

I am a lung doctor, in practice in Vermont since 2001. I am a Professor of Medicine at the University of Vermont, and Chair of the Department of Medicine for the University of Vermont Health Network. My current national roles including Chairing the Scientific Advisory Committee for the American Lung Association, Chairing the Pulmonary Board Certification Examination Committee for the American Board of Internal Medicine and Chairing the Pulmonary Review Committee for the Veteran’s Administration Research Program. I served on the National Institutes of Health’s most recent asthma guideline panel, providing care guidelines for children and adults with asthma in the U.S. I have devoted my career to improving lung health.

There is no place for flavored tobacco products; I would hope the committee realizes the dangers of such products designed to start young people smoking, and the devastating effects of smoking on health.

I will limit my testimony to my major concerns about permitting flavorings such as menthol in E-cigarettes:-

1. Flavorings in E-Cigarettes are particularly attractive to young people, and so put children and young adults at risk of long-term addiction.
2. Emerging science shows these flavorings cause inflammation and damage to the cells lining the lung. **These flavorings damage lung tissue.**^{1,2} This damage is the precursor of chronic lung disease.
3. The lung (unlike the stomach) functions by permitting substances (ideally oxygen) to rapidly transit into the bloodstream. The potential of **flavorings** to transit into the bloodstream could damage multiple organs;^{1,2} in the case of pregnancy flavorings (mint and menthol) increase the risk of fetal death 3-fold,³ and puts the developing baby at risk of unknown long-term health consequences.

Some argue that flavored E-cigarettes are an effective form of smoking cessation; we have far safer smoking cessation options available to people who smoke than flavored E-cigarettes.

For the sake of the health of our community, I urge the committee not to permit these dangerous products on the market in Vermont.

References:

1. Flavoring Agents in E-cigarette Liquids: A Comprehensive Analysis of Multiple Health Risks. Cureus. 2023 Nov 18;15(11):e48995.
2. Adverse Biophysical Impact of e-Cigarette Flavors on Pulmonary Surfactant. Environ Sci Technol. 2023 Oct 24;57(42):15882-15891
3. E-cigarette use during pregnancy and its association with adverse birth outcomes in the US. Prev Med 2023, 166: 107375

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