



H.171

Senate Committee
on Health and Welfare

April 13, 2016

Re: H.171, *An Act Relating to Restriction on the Use of Electronic Cigarettes*

Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility is a statewide business organization with more than 750 members across the state. Our members are dedicated to a triple-bottom line approach to business - they believe they can make a good profit and advance economic, social, and environmental ethics. VBSR celebrated our 25th anniversary last year.

VBSR believes employers have an obligation to create healthy work environments for all employees. The experience of our businesses is that smoke-free workplaces not only protect non-smokers from secondhand smoke, but also encourages smokers to quit or reduce consumption.

The United States Surgeon General concluded in a 2006 report that there is no risk-free exposure to secondhand smoke. Sending employees into workspaces, such as hotel rooms or semi-enclosed structures where smoking has occurred, is dangerous to the health of these employees.

We believe that H.171, which extends existing tobacco prohibitions to the so-called e-cigarette technology, is good public policy and perfectly in line with Vermont's long history of legislating this industry with the aim of improving public health and reducing smoking in teenagers and adults. H.171 is simply state regulation catching up with changing technology.

The e-cigarette industry has presented this new technology as safer than traditional tobacco products. Research is still developing in this area, but early analysis shows that this is not the case –

the aerosol released from these supposedly “safer” products contains nicotine, heavy metals, and cancer-causing substances.

One recent study concluded that e-cigarettes might actually be more harmful than traditional tobacco products. In fact, the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) recently concluded that e-cigarettes emit harmful chemicals to the air and should be regulated just as traditional tobacco products.

E-cigarettes also are sold in flavors such as cherry and cotton candy that have strong appeal to children and teenagers, a tactic that traditional tobacco companies shamelessly used in their marketing and sales strategies for decades. E-cigarette use among teenagers and young adults is a growing concern for public health experts and use of these products is seen as a stepping-stone to using traditional tobacco products. We cannot allow this industry to again turn healthy teenagers into adult addicts.

H.171 is a step toward a healthier future for Vermonters. We urge the committee to support this legislation.

Please let me know if you have any questions or comments.

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