



**American Cancer Society  
Cancer Action Network**

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Dear Senate Finance Committee,

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) is the nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society. We support evidence-based policy and legislative solutions designed to eliminate cancer as a major health problem. On behalf of our constituents, many of whom have been personally affected by cancer, we support taxing electronic cigarettes at the same rate as cigarettes and other tobacco products. **We urge this committee to tax any liquid, whether it contains nicotine or not, as well as any delivery devices, at 92 percent of wholesale and direct this revenue to support evidence-based tobacco prevention programs.**

Nationwide, and in Vermont, e-cigarette use among middle and high school students has now surpassed cigarette use. The 2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey points out that one in eight Vermont high school students and one in 25 Vermont middle school students report using e-cigarettes. From 2017 to 2018, e-cigarette use by U.S high school students rose 78 percent. In December, the U.S. Surgeon General labeled youth e-cigarette use an “epidemic” and urged states to act to address the crisis.

A 2016 U.S. Surgeon General’s report concluded “e-cigarette use is strongly associated with the use of other tobacco products among youth and young adults, particularly combustible tobacco products.<sup>1</sup>” ACS CAN is concerned that e-cigarette use is creating a new generation of Vermonters who will suffer from a deadly, lifelong addiction to nicotine and tobacco products.

Fortunately, current public policy and research shows us the path toward breaking the cycle of nicotine and tobacco addiction, while discouraging youth from ever starting to use e-cigarettes. This includes significant tax increases on all tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, and fully funding evidence-based tobacco prevention and cessation programs.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. E-Cigarette Use Among Youth and Young Adults. A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2016.

Research shows that nationally, a 10% cigarette price increase, if maintained against inflation, reduces youth smoking rates by at least 6.5%<sup>2 3 4 5</sup>. When tax increases are small, companies can adjust their prices or offer coupons and discounts to reduce the impact.

By increasing the tax on all tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, to an equivalent rate, Vermont can help reduce tax evasion, generate more new revenue, prevent initiation of these products and ensure that more tobacco users quit instead of switching to a cheaper product.

ACS CAN urges the committee to dedicate all e-cigarette tax revenue to supporting the state's tobacco control program. According to the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, the tobacco industry spends \$16.8 million annually on marketing in Vermont.<sup>6</sup> In comparison, Vermont only spends \$923,000 on tobacco prevention and cessation media campaigns. Evidence-based strategies, such as these media campaigns, help reduce the burden of nicotine and tobacco addiction. They also help reduce the prevalence of youth initiation.

ACS CAN believes taxing e-cigarettes is a critical step in reducing tobacco use in Vermont.

To get a clear sense of the allure and hold e-cigarettes have on young people, I strongly encourage the committee to read the following recent news articles:

[NYTimes: The Price of Cool - A Teenager, a Juul and a Nicotine Addiction](#)

[NYTimes: Addicted to Vaped Nicotine, Teenagers Have No Clear Path to Quitting](#)

In closing, we believe that this tax will save lives and we urge you to vote yes on H.47.

Sincerely,

**Jennifer Costa**

Vermont Government Relations Director, ACS CAN

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<sup>2</sup> Chaloupka, FJ, "Macro-Social Influences: The Effects of Prices and Tobacco Control Policies on the Demand for Tobacco Products," *Nicotine & Tobacco Research*, 1999, and other price studies at <http://www.ihrp.uic.edu/researcher/frank-j-chaloupka-phd> and <https://tobacconomics.org/>

<sup>3</sup> Tauras, J, et al., "Effects of Price and Access Laws on Teenage Smoking Initiation: A National Longitudinal Analysis," *Bridging the Gap Research, ImpacTeen*, April 24, 2001.

<sup>4</sup> Chaloupka, FJ & Pacula, R, "The Impact of Price on Youth Tobacco Use," Chapter 12 in National Cancer Institute, *Smoking and Tobacco Control Monograph 14, Changing Adolescent Smoking Prevalence*, November 2001; International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), *Effectiveness of Tax and Price Policies for Tobacco Control*, IARC Handbooks of Cancer Prevention in Tobacco Control, Volume 14, 2011.

<sup>5</sup> Community Preventive Services Task Force, "Tobacco Use and Secondhand Smoke Exposure: Interventions to Increase the Unit Price for Tobacco Products," November 2012, <https://www.thecommunityguide.org/findings/tobacco-use-and-secondhand-smoke-exposure-interventions-increase-unit-price-tobacco#tab-wtfff>

<sup>6</sup> Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-us/vermont>