



April 4, 2019

To: Senate Committee on Finance  
From: Tina Zuk, Government Relations Director, VT  
Subj: H.47

Our organization supports H.47 as a prevention tool to limit access to e-cigarettes to youth in Vermont, encourages you to retain the tax at 92% of wholesale so its equivalent to combustible cigarettes, and to use the revenue for Vermont's Tobacco Control Program for prevention efforts.

Significantly raising the price of a tobacco product has been shown to be one of the best ways to prevent people from using them, especially those, like youth who are price sensitive.

It's imperative that the legislature do all that it can to reduce youth use, as we've heard from the Surgeon General, its reached crisis levels. Combined with tobacco 21 legislation and an internet ban, this measure could provide a strong tool for youth prevention.

I've included commentary from Vermont schools encouraging action because these devices are easy to get and are creating an addiction in youths that many don't know how to overcome.

In addition:

- Use of e-cigarettes, including the popular JUUL has increased dramatically in Vermont and the nation. With the advent of e-cigarettes, 25% of Vermont youths now use some form of tobacco.<sup>1</sup> Nationally, e-cigarette use by high school students increased 78% and by middle school students by 48% last year.<sup>2</sup>
  - The Monitoring the Future Survey showed that in 2018, e-cigarette use by high school students was the largest one-year increase seen for any substance in the history of the survey.<sup>3</sup>
  - The outgoing FDA commissioner is forecasting that overall youth tobacco use in the National Youth Tobacco Survey that is currently in the field might be as high as 40% largely driven by e-cigarette initiation and uptake.<sup>4</sup>
- Using e-cigarettes has been shown to increase the likelihood of smoking traditional cigarettes among young people, raising concerns that e-cigarettes are acting as nicotine entry products that may lead to use of more dangerous products.
  - A 2018 report from the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine concluded that "there is substantial evidence that e-cigarette increases the risk of ever using combustible tobacco cigarettes among youth and young adults."<sup>5</sup>
  - Researchers at Dartmouth's Norris Cotton Cancer Center have also found that e-cigarettes may facilitate smoking initiation in adolescents. According to the study,

“E-cigarettes could lead to more than 1.5 million years of life lost because their use could substantially increase the number of adolescents and young adults who eventually become cigarette smokers.”<sup>6</sup>

- Youth who use e-cigarettes are four times more likely to transition to combustible cigarettes.<sup>7</sup>
- Many youths are also unaware that the devices contain nicotine which has a powerful and negative effect on their developing brains. A recent study found that 98.7 percent of all e-cigarettes sold at convenience stores, supermarkets and similar outlets contain nicotine.
  - Yet many youths are unaware that the products they’re using contain nicotine. In fact, 60 percent of teens incorrectly reported e-cigarettes being comprised of mostly flavoring.<sup>8</sup> A 2017 study by the Truth Initiative Schroeder Institute® found that 63 percent of JUUL users did not know that this product always contains nicotine.
  - Vermont principals agree and are now dealing with addiction problems in schools from students who have to have their e-cig hit in classrooms and bathrooms. The impact on schools is overwhelming. (See attached.)

---

<sup>1</sup> Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2017

<sup>2</sup> CDC, Notes from the Field: Use of Electronic Cigarettes and Any Tobacco Product Among Middle and High School Students — United States, 2011–2018; November 16, 2018 / 67(45);1276–1277.

<sup>3</sup> Miech R, Johnston, L., OMalley, PM., Bachman, JG., Patrick, ME. Adolescent vaping and nicotine use in 2017-18 - US National Estimates. New England Journal of Medicine. December 17, 2018.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/vaping-scott-gottlieb-ecigs-fda-may-need-to-take-strict-action-2019-04-02/>

<sup>5</sup> National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2018. Public Health Consequences of E-Cigarettes. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/24952>.

Quantifying population-level health benefits and harms of e-cigarette use in the United States.

<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0193328>

<sup>7</sup> JAMA, <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2723425>

<sup>8</sup> <https://truthinitiative.org/news/e-cigarettes-facts-stats-and-regulations>