

Dear Committee Members

My name is Catherine Kaiser and I am writing today, April 3rd of 2015 in opposition of HB 2134

I would like to submit my testimony for my reasons that I am opposing HB 2134

Please oppose HB 2134. Any tax on low-risk vapor products is unjustifiable and harmful to public health

I am writing as a voter and taxpayer urging you to oppose HB 2134, and any other bills that would impose an unjustifiable tax on low-risk, smoke-free electronic cigarettes. The potential benefits of vapor products, an incredibly low-risk alternative to smoking, far outweigh any speculative, minor risks.

Subjecting smoke-free vapor products to sin taxes and other punitive regulations that are designed to discourage smoking is grossly inappropriate. Changing the law to tax low-risk, smoke-free vapor products in the same manner as tobacco products will actually create barriers for adults to quit smoking, something that is indefensible from a public health standpoint.

Restricting the availability and variety of e-cigarettes and increasing their purchase price will encourage Oregon's 680,00+ adult smokers to continue smoking instead of making the switch to a product that is estimated to be 99% less hazardous than cigarettes.

While smoking is widely known to pose significant and potentially devastating health risks, each year only approximately 3% of smokers will successfully quit. Innovative products that further the public health goal of reducing smoking should be promoted. There is overwhelming evidence, ranging from systematic studies to thousands of detailed testimonials, showing that e-cigarettes help many smokers quit or reduce their smoking habit, even after they have unsuccessfully tried every other method.

There is no tobacco in these products and Oregon needs to stop using tobacco and e-cigarettes in the same sentence. There is also e-liquid that contains no nicotine, which I now use, and you have the choice of nicotine levels with you certainly don't have with combustible cigarettes.

I smoked cigarettes for 45 years and at the age of 62 I was able to quit by switching to vaping E-Cigarettes. I have tried all the other quit smoking products available on the market for several years and none worked even though my heart was really into quitting. These have included the nicotine patches, the nicotine gum, and Chantix and the stick type E-Cigarettes sold at drug stores and gas stations. All these products were tried several times during my life but yet I always went back to smoking. I have even resorted to trying to quit cold turkey and cutting down on the number of cigarettes I smoked to no avail. Four months ago I decided to try vaping with E-liquids in the newer devices (batteries and tanks) they sell now. The very first day I tried this method I have not had a desire to smoke since and have not smoked since.

I watched my Dad die a horrible death a few years ago of lung cancer directly related to smoking and even that did not help me quit smoking.

I feel so much better health wise and self image wise about not having to smoke anymore. My doctor is even on board with vaping and told me she has several other patients that have quit using the same method.

One last note before closing. With all these e-cigarette bills going through you have changed me and thousands of other vapers along with their family, friends and neighbors who support the switch they were able to make from conventional cigarettes to e-cigarettes, into one issue voters. We will not be supporting anyone in the next election from any party that does not support vaping.

Very Respectfully,
Catherine M. Kaiser
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I look forward to your response on this issue. I thank you for considering my comments and hope you will oppose misguided attempts to tax e-cigarettes and their components. Please keep me informed as to the progress of this bill as it moves through the legislative process.

