

Dear Chair Nosse, Vice-Chairs Goodwin and Nelson, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Varinder Basi, and I own and operate a convenience store business in Oregon.

I urge your opposition on House Bill 3090!

This bill bans the sale of all flavored tobacco and vapor products in Oregon, and if passed, would massively hurt my small business. I, like many other members of the local Indian community in Oregon, earn my living through the operation of my convenience store, which is dependent on the sale of flavored tobacco products for a large portion of revenue.

This bill would render my convenience store business model unsustainable. And if that happens, it will lead to all sorts of problems for me and other convenience store owners in our state, many of whom are also minorities and immigrants who come here for the opportunity to work and create a better life for themselves and their families, and which they are able to do after obtaining and operating a convenience store business.

This bill would lead to employee layoffs and even force small businesses to shut down due to lost sales, and because of these risks, I urge your opposition on HB 3090.

Moreover, there are many other serious problems with this bill that need to be considered. As we all know, banning a substance doesn't mean people will stop consuming it. Instead, black markets in tobacco and vapor products will (and currently do) flourish in Oregon, and the products obtained through these channels are much more dangerous and harmful, and may even be laced with fentanyl, than tobacco obtained from legal routes.

This bill aims to address youth tobacco addiction, which indeed is a problem. But the fact is that most youth do not get their tobacco and vape products from licensed and regulated convenience stores who enforce the law and only sell these products to adults aged 21+. Instead, they get these products from black markets, which will grow and potentially worsen our youth addiction problem if HB 3090 passes.

The inconsistency in Oregon's drug laws this bill creates also needs to be noted. If passed, HB 3090 would mean it would be LEGAL in Oregon to possess small amounts of lethal and dangerous hard drugs, like heroin and meth, but ILLEGAL to sell flavored tobacco products. How does this make any sense?

I urge you to oppose HB 3090. Anyone who says they want to support minority communities in our state should oppose this bill because of its destructive impact on our convenience store businesses, and by extension, on our families and life outcomes. I hope you consider the negative effects this bill would have on small businesses like mine and say NO to HB 3090!

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Varinder Basi