

**International
Association of
Machinists and
Aerospace Workers**



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OFFICE OF THE INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT

March 22, 2023

The Honorable Rob Nosse
Chairman, House Behavioral Health and Health Care Committee
State Representative, State of Oregon
900 Court Street, NW
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Representative Nosse:

On behalf of the workers we represent at Philip Morris USA, US Smokeless Tobacco Company, John Middleton Company and Helix Innovations, we write to express our opposition to HB 3090.

We all agree that no minor should use any form of tobacco. It is important the legal age to purchase tobacco products in Oregon is now 21 – and that includes vapor products. However, we believe this legislation goes much too far. It would criminalize the sale of all menthol cigarettes, flavored moist smokeless tobacco (MST), flavored cigars and flavored alternative nicotine products which are manufactured by and enjoyed by our union brothers and sisters.

By banning these products, it would remove all these products out of the legitimate manufacturing and distribution chain, and shift them over to illegal manufacturers, many of which are overseas, and to illegal smugglers. That will hurt our members that work in the tobacco industry and undermine FDA regulations. I strongly encourage you to come and visit one off our plants and meet with our union members who would be hurt by this bill.

We do not understand why this bill takes such an extreme approach. The problem is underage vaping, and we agree those rates must be reduced. But underage use of traditional tobacco products is the lowest in decades – teen use of cigarettes is 2.0%, MST 1.6% and machine-made cigars 2.8% according to government data (NYTS). By comparison, teenage use of alcohol is at 15.6% and marijuana 12.3%, according to the NIH, Monitoring the Future, 2022 (combined 8th, 10th & 12th grades). This bill does nothing with flavored products in these categories – in fact, marijuana laws are moving in the opposite direction.

This legislation will gut excise and sales tax revenue for state and local governments in Oregon, which my union members care about because many of them and their families benefit from government services. It will also increase crime and endanger the public with bootleg and potentially adulterated products.

Rather than move ahead with an extreme ban that we know will destroy our jobs, we should let the recent Tobacco 21 law further the positive impact it is already having. It is clear with usage at a generational low, keeping licensed retailers in charge of tobacco sales is the best

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way to ensure our youth can't access these products. Age verification will NOT be done in an illicit market. Rushing ahead with a total ban is like Prohibition all over again. We know it won't work, because it didn't work when it was tried with alcohol. All it did was send legitimate jobs underground and increase crime – it certainly didn't end drinking.

We encourage the Oregon Legislature to focus legislation on solving the problem of youth vaping and not prohibit adults over the age of 21 from being able to purchase products they chose. We respectfully ask that you protect our members' high wage, high skilled jobs by voting "NO" on banning flavored tobacco products for adults.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Martinez, Jr." The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent loop at the end.

Robert Martinez, Jr.
IAM International President

RM/vk