



March 21, 2023

TO: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care
FR: Charlie Fisher, State Director, Oregon State Public Interest Research Group (OSPIRG)
RE: HB 3090

OSPIRG is a statewide, member-based, public interest group with thousands of members around Oregon.

OSPIRG supports HB 3090 to protect kids from tobacco addiction by taking all flavored tobacco products off the market.

The tobacco industry has evolved over time to create new, highly addictive products, but one thing hasn't changed--flavored tobacco products hook kids. **A government study found that [81% of youth who have ever used tobacco started with a flavored product](#), and most tobacco users start young.**[1]

Flavored products help fuel youth tobacco use:

- E-cigarettes have been the [most commonly used tobacco product](#) among middle and high school students in the United States since 2014.[2]
- According to the Student Health Survey, [5.7% of 8th graders and 13.3% of 11th graders](#) in Oregon reported using a tobacco product in 2020. [3]
- Among youth tobacco consumers in 2020, 3 in 4 eighth graders (75.4%) used flavored products, while nearly 8 in 10 (78.3%) 11th graders used flavored products. This is compared to 22% of adults (25+) using flavored tobacco products [3]
- According to the Food and Drug Administration, [70%](#) of youth e-cigarette users say they use the products because they come in appealing flavors.[4]
- The Surgeon General [concluded in a 2016 report](#) that, "E-cigarettes are marketed by promoting flavors and using a wide variety of media channels and approaches that have been used in the past for marketing conventional tobacco products to youth and young adults." [5]

All flavored products are a problem:

All flavored tobacco products pose a threat to youth because they can lure them into a life-time of tobacco addiction. HB 3090 would help reduce overall youth tobacco use by taking all flavored products off the market, not just a select few.

- Although e-cigarettes are the most widely used tobacco product among Oregon 8th and 11th graders, 4.1% smoke cigarettes, and 1.9% use smokeless tobacco.[3]
- Menthol flavoring lessens the harshness of smoking tobacco, which makes it easier for young people to start smoking cigarettes. According to the Food and Drug Administration, [youth smokers](#) are more likely to use menthol cigarettes than any other age group.

- In 2013-2014, [73.8%](#) of youth cigar smokers reported that they smoked cigars “because they come in flavors I like” (PATH Wave 1, 2013-2014).[6]

Nicotine is harmful to kids’ health:

E-cigarettes almost always contain nicotine, an addictive drug that can harm adolescent [brain development](#) and affect young peoples’ learning, memory and attention.[7]

- Nicotine use in adolescents can also contribute to mood disorders and increase their risk of future addiction to other dangerous substances.[8]
- [Evidence](#) also suggests that young e-cigarette users may be more likely to smoke combustible cigarettes in the future. [9]

The benefit, if any, to the smokers who claim to be using flavored e-cigarettes as a way to quit smoking combustible cigarettes simply doesn’t outweigh the public health risk these products pose to young people in Oregon. **Moreover, [no e-cigarette company](#) has received FDA authorization to market their e-cigarette products as a safe and effective way to quit smoking.**[10]

The federal government has failed to fully address the youth e-cigarette epidemic, and it’s moving too slowly to take other youth friendly products like menthol cigarettes off the market. It’s critical that Oregon lawmakers act now to end the sale of all flavored tobacco products.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the rapid rise in e-cigarette use among young people has [erased past progress](#) in reducing overall youth tobacco use. Oregon lawmakers should end the sale of all flavored tobacco products. Otherwise, thousands more kids could face a future tainted by tobacco addiction.