



**Korean-American Grocers Association of Oregon**  
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Thank you Chair Nosse and members of the Committee,

My name is Chong Sullivan and I am here today representing the Oregon Korean Grocers Association and over 250 Korean owned retailers throughout the State.

The State of Oregon has numerous and far reaching challenges that keep officials busy. From preserving affordable housing and addressing income inequality to supporting a regulatory and policy environment in which local small businesses can not only succeed, but thrive—there’s certainly no shortage of hard work to be done.

Youth vaping is an issue that needs to be solved, but this ban is an extreme measure that goes too far. Banning all flavored tobacco products – including menthol cigarettes and smokeless tobacco – will hurt retailers and our communities.

Many of our small business owners are already struggling to stay open post-Covid and a total ban on flavored tobacco will make it that much harder to stay in business. Our member stores are good community partners and employ thousands of people.

The members of the Korean American Grocers Association of Oregon are responsible business owners who support and follow age-verification procedures when selling tobacco products. A total flavor ban on traditional tobacco products would cause many of our customers to drive to other States or Native American smoke shops to get the products they prefer. The State will lose a massive amount of tax revenue. Even worse, this ban would create an illicit market, fueling criminal activity where IDs are not checked – making it easier for kids to get access. Criminal networks will emerge and unregulated products will also emerge, exposing our kids to even more dangerous products including fentanyl.

For many stores, the sale of flavored tobacco products brings in customers and are the sales store owners need to remain in business, so they can offer other items customers can purchase while there—gas, milk, eggs, and other food. When tobacco sales are removed from the picture, many stores will be forced to close their doors. When these stores across the State are forced to close because of such a ban, many residents will be affected. Oregonians already have difficulty locating easily accessible food stores. We truly fear that this broad ban will worsen that problem and increase food deserts in our State.

There are many more problems facing our State that should focus on, rather than banning legal products for those 21 and older. We just recently rose the age of purchase and retailers also have to have a tobacco license.

The State of Oregon should focus on other priorities and reject this business-killing ban. Thank you.