



April 10, 2018

Representatives Seaton, Foster, Gara, Grenn, Guttenberg, Kawasaki, Ortis, Pruitt, Thompson, Tilton and Wilson  
House Finance Committee  
Alaska State Capitol  
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Representatives,

I am writing today in support of Senate Bill 15, E-Cigs, Sale to and Possession by Minors. This bill is extraordinarily timely in that the e-cigarette and vaping industry has the potential to undo years of progress in the area of youth tobacco use. E-cigarette use among middle and high school students tripled from 2013 to 2014, according to data published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Center for Tobacco Products. Findings from the 2014 National Youth Tobacco Survey show that current e-cigarette use (use on at least 1 day in the past 30 days) among high school students increased from 4.5 percent in 2013 to 13.4 percent in 2014. Among middle school students, current e-cigarette use more than tripled from 1.1 percent in 2013 to 3.9 percent in 2014. Marketers use child friendly flavors, themes of rebellion, and celebrity endorsements to sell them – the same strategies that were long used to market traditional cigarettes to children.

Further, recent research indicates that youth who try e-cigs are much more likely than other youth to progress to traditional cigarettes. A 2015 National Institutes of Health report showed that 9th graders who used e-cigs were over three times more likely to start using combustible tobacco products than those who didn't use e-cigs. The vaping industry is protecting its business interests when it pushes the ideas that e-cigarettes are safer than traditional cigarettes, have little health risk to the user, and can actually help people quit smoking. However, it is important to note that the FDA has not approved these products as smoking cessation tools.

Vape shop owners have claimed that they do not sell their products to minors, yet the Alaska Department of Health and Social Service's December 15, 2016 memo on the results of its Electronic Nicotine Delivery System (ENDS) investigation proves otherwise. In that investigation there was a 26.1% sell rate of vaping fluid to minors. In addition, there was a 9.1% sell rate of e-cigarettes to minors, which is nearly double the tobacco sell rate.

The Mat-Su Health Foundation Board strongly supports SB15, and we urge you to move this bill out of committee and to the floor for a vote. Please feel free to contact me with any questions about the research cited here.

Sincerely,

*Elizabeth Ripley*

Executive Director

Cc: Sen. Costello, Sen. Hughes, Sen. Meyer, Sen. Gardner