

Good afternoon Madame Chair and members of the committee,

I oppose SB 45. It'll be 8 years this year that I have been tobacco free! I used vaping to get off combustible cigarettes. Over the years I believe vaping has prolonged my life. I have been testifying for the last 6/7 years with the same story.

I've been vaping since Dec 2013 when I received my first starter kit for Christmas from my boyfriend's mom, who is a nurse practitioner. I started smoking combustible cigarettes when I was 13. I've noticed differences since I switched to this healthier alternative. As a smoker it was hard to run and play around with my then 9/10 year old daughter. Once I switched to vaping I had energy to run and play, as a matter of fact we used to race each other often and I was able to keep up with her! I've been to Zumba classes to help lose weight, and I don't hack or feel a need to have a cigarette like I use to, getting the snow machine unstuck is easier now too! I no longer stink like an ashtray and food tastes so different now! I'm not eating more just to cover the smoke taste in my mouth. I started at 12mg in a Protank. I now have a few different set ups and I'm on 3mg! 3mg is lowest nicotine level beside 0mg (zero nicotine). Although I can mix a 3mg with a 0mg and get 1.5mg. It's amazing the harm reduction that I have done for my body and wouldn't have been able to without being introduced to vaping. I've tried Chantix, gum and patches. I often found myself with nasty cigarette in my hand and patch on my arm. The patch is itchy, the gum tastes horrible and the way the Chantix made me feel was the worst, nausea all the time, the dreams were so intense, suicidal thoughts. Here are a few more side effects of Chantix: depression, changes in mood and thinking, anxiety, panic, aggression, anger, mania, abnormal sensations, hallucinations paranoia and confusion and many other more. None of that is healthy, but is approved by the FDA. Alaskans already have a mental health issue, why add to it? Chantix is also banned by the FAA and the military!

My boyfriend opened his own store in Fairbanks, AK, because we couldn't find any e liquid or replacement coils for our new devices. We have met so many wonderful people who wanted quit smoking combustible cigarettes for their themselves and their family. So many vaping success stories start with "I have tried many FDA approved ways and nothing worked!" Many of our military customers who have switched to vaping have reported their PT scores have improved!

With the PACT ACT being expanded to include vaping products, shipping vaping products will be a thing of the past. Unlike the internet, we card everyone! Vape shops are the first defense to underage vaping. Vape shops educate customers in battery safety and building safe coils. Dedicated vape shops carry reputable e-liquids! They can tell you everything about the e-liquid and the company they order from! There are many reputable shops around Alaska, everyone is invited to come into a local vape shop or give them a call to become more familiar with vape products and to see what the industry is all about. We are here to educate, support, and offer guidance to all who look for a healthier alternative! The vaping community is very close knit in Alaska! We support a tobacco free lifestyle! We encourage getting healthy and active again!

I don't agree with the 75% wholesale tax. It would be more tempting to go back to traditional cigarettes, because it will be cheaper to smoke cigarettes than it will be for a safer healthier alternative. The Royal College of physicians in England have published research that proves it is 95% safer than smoking. This tax has been proven to be very regressive. Our local city and

borough have both shut down this tax, as had the legislature during the Walker administration. We are currently still in a pandemic, that is hurting small businesses, this tax will hurt small businesses across Alaska even more.

As for shipping, Congress has expanded the PACT ACT essentially shutting down internet sales, restricting shipping abilities to bush communities would cut off their access to healthier alternatives. People are able to bush order alcohol products why couldn't they call and order a vapor product that could potentially save their lives?

I have a solution for revenue. Let's get the Quitline to push accurate information. The state spent \$9 million on the tobacco Quitline the last time I checked. Other countries are taking a whole different approach to this vaping technology. They are encouraging their residents to switch to Vaping by putting Vape stores in hospitals and giving vouchers for starter kits to help smokers make the switch! This is no different than the state giving out patches and other nicotine replacement therapies that have been found to be half as effective in smoking cessation than vaping. Why not support what works? This would also make the Quitline ads more effective in getting smokers to give up combustible products, support local businesses, and get accurate information out to smokers. This will save the state way more money in health care costs incurred from smoking related illness than any tax would bring in.

Thank you for your time,

Jessi Walton
Fairbanks, AK