Senator Dyson,

I'm writing this evening as both a local business owner and an advocate for the electronic cigarette industry.  A bill being introduced before your committee on Thursday morning (SB209) attempts to classify electronic cigarettes as smoking.  And to the point, smoking is not vaping and vaping is not smoking.  While I wholeheartedly agree that tobacco and specifically second hand smoke is a major detriment to public health, classifying electronic cigarettes with smoking is a mistake.

As the former American Lung Association president Charles Dean Connor has recently stated, electronic cigarettes are one of the most promising tools to arrive in some time to combat smoking.  They are proving to be effective tools in the battle as they replicate the patterns & feel of smoking, without the tremendously harmful byproducts of combustion.  As he and the former Surgeon General of the United States Dr. Bernard Parks agree, classifying these as cigarettes and tobacco products, though well-intentioned, is scientifically uninformed and and could "constitute a giant step backward in the effort to defeat tobacco smoking."  This bill would disincentivize smokers from switching to the healthier alternative as the unintended message is that they are just as dangerous.

As the owner of the largest electronic cigarette store in Alaska, we see, on a daily basis, smokers and former smokers declare there allegiance to the new technology as the saviour of their lives.  From the first time they try an electronic cigarette they realize that they can truly and honestly use the devices to quit their destructive habit.  The repetition of hand to mouth, the feeling of a throat hit, the nicotine buzz - it's all there. And smokers don't smoke for the smoke - they smoke for the nicotine.  And unfortunately, the smoke is what kills them.

Recent research from reputable organizations like Drexler University indicate that the effects of second hand vapor are simply unfounded.  The vapor simply isn't an issue, as the levels of nicotine and other particulates are incredibly low and unsubstantial.  And because this bill aims at protecting employees and consumers in workplaces, we must exclude the electronic cigarette language until scientific studies are released stating else wise.

This bill would directly impact our business as it truly is a try before buy situation.  We offer so many combinations, strengths & products that to a new ex-smoker, it is simply overwhelming.  Our employees have become experts at showcasing the technology to customers and placing them on the right products for their taste.  Because of this, this bill would directly impact our business.

As an employer of 7 and soon to be 14 when we open our new store in Wasilla this month, we feel it is our responsibility to speak up and protect both our employees and more importantly our customers.  Simply put, their lives depend on it.

We are looking forward to testifying in person Thursday morning in committee in Juneau, and hope to meet with you as your schedule allows to further explain the concept of electronic cigarettes, vaping & the tremendous benefits that accompany it.

I've attached links to scientific studies for your review.

Thank You For Your Time,

Matt Waggoner

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[Smoking Kills, and So Might E-Cigarette Regulation](http://www.american.com/archive/2013/november/smoking-kills-and-so-might-e-cigarette-regulation) : <http://www.american.com/archive/2013/november/smoking-kills-and-so-might-e-cigarette-regulation>

[Peering Through the Mist: Systematic Review of what the Chemistry of Contaminants in Electronic Cigarettes Tells Us about Health Risks](http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2458/14/18/abstract):  <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2458/14/18/abstract>