

7.3 (a)(j)

Pilon, Janet

Subject: Feedback on Proposed Municipal Vaping Tax

From: Thomas Soumbos

Sent: Tuesday, May 6, 2025 9:00 AM

To: <mailto:clerk@hamilton.ca>

Subject: Feedback on Proposed Municipal Vaping Tax Dear Mayor Horwath and Councillors, My name is Thomas Soumbos, and I'm a resident and vape user in Hamilton. I recently came across Item 9.3 from the General Issues Committee Minutes and saw that the City is considering a municipal vaping products tax. I wanted to take a moment to share my concerns and kindly ask you to reconsider this approach.

As someone who uses vaping as a tool to stay away from cigarettes, I believe this proposed tax could do more harm than good—for both public health and local businesses.

Vaping Is Already More Heavily Taxed Than Cigarettes Vaping products in Ontario are already taxed at a higher rate (182%) than cigarettes (168%). This doesn't make much sense, especially considering that vaping is widely recognized as a less harmful alternative for adult smokers. A local tax would further penalize those trying to make a healthier switch. **Education Works Better Than Taxation for Youth Prevention** I understand concerns about youth vaping, but raising taxes isn't the most effective way to address that. Education has a much better track record. In fact, Health Canada has recently launched updated prevention materials that could be used in schools and youth programs here in Hamilton.

The Stats Being Cited Are Out of Date

Some of the statistics referenced in the Committee discussion are a few years old. More recent data—like the Canadian Health Survey on Children and Youth released in March 2025—shows that youth vaping has actually declined by over 40% in the past five years among those aged 12 to 17. It's really important that decisions like this are based on current and accurate information.

This Tax Could Hurt Local, Responsible Businesses Hamilton vape retailers follow strict rules, check ID diligently, and support our local economy. A municipal tax risks pushing customers either outside the city or toward unregulated sources, which don't follow the rules and don't contribute to community safety or revenue.

This Issue Is Already Being Handled Provincially The topic of vape taxation has already been brought up during Ontario's pre-budget consultations. Adding a city-level tax on top of existing federal and provincial ones could create confusion and extra burden for local shops—and may not be enforceable in a practical way.

In short, I'm worried this tax could unintentionally drive business away, fuel the illicit market, and hurt the very people it's trying to help.

I truly hope City Council will consider focusing on education and enforcement rather than additional taxation. Thank you so much for your time and for listening to feedback from community members like me.

Warm regards,

Thomas Soumbos