

Pilon, Janet

Subject: Opposition to Hamilton Municipal Vape Tax

From: Roberto Veloso

Sent: Tuesday, May 6, 2025 9:30 AM

To: <mailto:clerk@hamilton.ca>

Subject: Opposition to Hamilton Municipal Vape Tax

Dear Mayor Horwath and Councillors,

My name is Roberto Veloso and I am a responsible adult vape user. I recently read Item 9.3 of the General Issues Committee Minutes from April 30, 2025 and learned that the City of Hamilton is considering implementing a municipal tax on vaping products. I am writing to express my strong opposition to this initiative.

Vaping Is Already Over-Taxed Compared to Cigarettes Vaping carries a higher total excise tax burden than cigarettes in Ontario—182% for vaping versus 168% for cigarettes. This is despite vaping being widely recognized as a harm reduction tool for adult smokers trying to quit. Adding a municipal tax would unfairly punish those of us who choose vaping as a less harmful alternative to smoking, making it harder to access and discouraging harm reduction.

Taxation Is Not an Effective Tool to Curb Youth Use Higher taxes do not prevent youth vaping—education does. Health Canada has released new prevention content that should be promoted in schools and youth programs instead of imposing additional taxes. Resources should be directed toward awareness and enforcement, not penalizing responsible adult vapers.

The Youth Vaping Statistics Used Are Outdated and Misleading The statistics referenced in the General Issues Committee discussion are not up to date. Recent data from Statistics Canada (March 7, 2025) shows that youth vaping has dropped by more than 40% over the past five years for ages 12-17. Decisions that impact adult consumers should be based on accurate, current data, not misleading numbers.

This Tax Will Drive Consumers to Unregulated Markets I choose to buy my products from regulated businesses that comply with strict standards. A municipal vape tax would drive consumers like me to unregulated markets or force us to purchase outside Hamilton, where taxes do not apply. These unregulated sources do not follow safety regulations, do not contribute to the economy, and do not protect youth.

Vaping Taxation Has Already Been Addressed at the Provincial Level This issue has already been raised with the Minister of Finance during Ontario's pre-budget consultations. Adding an additional local tax will only create confusion and unnecessary financial burden, making it harder for vapers to access legal, regulated products.

I urge the City Council to reconsider this unnecessary and harmful tax and instead focus on education, enforcement, and evidence-based policies that support public health goals.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Roberto