

7.3 (a)(w)

Pilon, Janet

Subject: Opposition to Hamilton Municipal Vape Tax

From: Phil Lakatos
Sent: Tuesday, May 6, 2025 10:02 AM
To: <mailto:clerk@hamilton.ca>
Subject: Opposition to Hamilton Municipal Vape Tax

Dear Mayor Horwath and City Councillors,

My name is Phil Lakatos, and I am a vape user. I read Item 9.3 from the General Issues Committee and saw that Hamilton might add a new city tax on vaping. I am writing to say this is not a good idea.

Vaping Is Already Taxed More Than Smoking

In Ontario, vaping products have a 182% excise tax. Cigarettes have a 168% tax. That means vaping is taxed more than smoking, even though vaping helps many adults quit smoking. Adding a city tax would make vaping even more expensive than smoking. That's not fair for adults trying to be healthier.

More Taxes Don't Stop Kids From Vaping

Raising the price doesn't stop kids from vaping. Teaching them does. Health Canada made new tools to help kids learn about vaping. These should be used in schools and youth programs in Hamilton. This would help more than a new tax.

The Vaping Stats Used Are Outdated

The numbers used in the city's report are old. New numbers from Statistics Canada (from the Canadian Health Survey on Children and Youth, March 7, 2025) show that youth vaping dropped by more than 40% in the last five years for kids aged 12 to 17. That's a big drop. We should use up-to-date facts when making big decisions.

This New Tax Will Hurt Local Stores

Vape shops already check ID and follow all the rules. They also help the local economy. But if Hamilton adds this tax, people like me may shop in other cities or online. Some of those places don't follow rules and don't care about keeping kids safe. They also don't pay taxes.

This Problem Has Already Been Looked At by the Province

Vape taxes have already been talked about by the Ontario Minister of Finance during pre-budget meetings. If the city adds its own tax on top of the federal and provincial taxes, it will confuse store owners and make their jobs harder. Also, the tax would be hard to enforce just in Hamilton. Stores might move to other nearby places and still sell to Hamilton customers.

This city vape tax won't help kids, but it will hurt adults who follow the rules and the small businesses that serve them. It could even grow the illegal market, or worse push me and everyone else back to smoking cigarettes.

Please do not go ahead with this tax. Instead, focus on education and enforcing the rules we already have.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

--

Phil Lakatos

Marketing and Management Professional