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Pilon, Janet

Subject: Opposition to Hamilton municipal vape tax

From: Gurpreet kaur Sidhu

Sent: Tuesday, May 6, 2025 10:15 AM

To: <mailto:clerk@hamilton.ca>

Subject: Opposition to Hamilton municipal vape tax My name is saif Ali, and I am vape retailer with store located at 1006 Queen street west, Toronto ,ON I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed municipal tax on vaping products currently under consideration, as referenced in Item 9.3 of the General Issues Committee Minutes. As a specialty vape retailer operating in a tightly regulated environment, I urge Council to reconsider this initiative, which I believe is misguided, counterproductive to public health goals, and damaging to small, compliant businesses like mine. Vaping Is Already Over-Taxed Compared to Cigarettes Vaping products currently face a combined excise tax burden of 182% in Ontario—significantly higher than the 168% burden on combustible cigarettes. This discrepancy is troubling, considering vaping is widely recognized as a harm reduction tool for adult smokers. Imposing a municipal tax will disproportionately impact those trying to quit smoking and sends the wrong message about safer alternatives to tobacco.

Taxation Does Not Effectively Curb Youth Use There is little evidence to support the idea that taxation effectively deters youth from vaping. Education, not punitive pricing, is the proven path forward. Health Canada recently released updated prevention resources tailored for youth; these should be promoted across schools and community programs in Hamilton as a more effective, evidence-based response.

Youth Vaping Rates Are Declining

The data cited in the General Issues Committee discussion is outdated and misleading. According to the Canadian Health Survey on Children and Youth, published March 7, 2025, youth vaping among those aged 12–17 has decreased by over 40% in the past five years. Policy decisions that carry significant economic consequences must be based on current and accurate data.

The Tax Will Harm Law-Abiding Retailers

My business—and many others—strictly comply with all federal and provincial regulations, including age verification and product standards. A municipal tax will push consumers toward unregulated, illicit markets or out of the Hamilton area entirely. These underground sellers do not pay taxes, do not follow rules, and do not prioritize youth protection.

The Issue Is Already Addressed at Higher Government Levels Vaping taxation has already been considered at both the federal and provincial levels, including Ontario's pre-budget consultations. Introducing a patchwork of municipal taxes creates confusion, administrative burden, and enforcement challenges. It will further strain small businesses and may incentivize relocation outside Hamilton's jurisdiction—without achieving the intended policy goals.

Conclusion

This proposed tax will not protect youth—it will punish responsible adults and fuel the illicit market. I urge Council to focus on education and regulatory enforcement, not additional taxation that undermines legitimate businesses and public health progress.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely

Saif

Vape palace.