

7.3 (a)(q)

Pilon, Janet

Subject: Opposition to Municipal Vape Tax - Hamilton

From: Julia Byrne

Sent: Tuesday, May 6, 2025 10:56 AM

To: <mailto:clerk@hamilton.ca>

Subject: Opposition to Municipal Vape Tax - Hamilton Dear Andrea Horvath and City Councillors, My name is Julia Byrne, and I am the supervisor of all three locations of 180 Smoke in Hamilton.

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposal outlined in Item 9.3 of the General Issues Committee minutes from April 30, 2025, regarding the implementation of a municipal tax on vaping products in the City of Hamilton. Having worked in the vaping industry for nearly six years with a responsible and compliant retailer in this already highly regulated field, I can say with confidence that this proposal would be both harmful to public health objectives and detrimental to local businesses operating within the rules.

Over the years, I have engaged with thousands of adult smokers—many of whom are lifelong tobacco users—seeking a less harmful alternative. For many, vaping has proven to be the first method that successfully helped them transition away from combustible cigarettes after other cessation tools failed. Imposing an additional municipal tax on top of existing federal and provincial levies will increase the financial burden on these individuals, discourage their efforts, and potentially drive them toward unregulated markets or retailers in neighboring municipalities.

While I agree that youth vaping is a serious concern—particularly among those who have never smoked—introducing more taxes is not the appropriate solution. A better approach involves investing in preventative education programs and ensuring rigorous enforcement of age-restriction laws. Health Canada's recently released prevention content for schools should be actively promoted across Hamilton, and greater focus should be placed on holding non-compliant retailers accountable.

Thank you for considering this perspective. I respectfully urge the Council to reconsider this initiative in light of its potential consequences for adult smokers who are making a sincere effort to quit, as well as the compliant businesses that will be adversely affected. Effective tools to address youth vaping already exist—this potential municipal tax is not among them. Sincerely,

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Julia Byrne

Senior Supervisor - Hamilton

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