

**Pilon, Janet**

---

**Subject:** Item 9.3 of the General Issues Committee Minutes

From: Paul Counsell  
Sent: Tuesday, May 6, 2025 10:53 AM  
To: <mailto:clerk@hamilton.ca>  
Subject: RE: Item 9.3 of the General Issues Committee Minutes

To: <mailto:clerk@hamilton.ca>  
Subject: Opposition to Hamilton Municipal Vape Tax

Dear Mayor Horwath and Councillors,

My name is Paul Counsell, and I am a specialty vape retailer with 10 brick and mortar retail stores in Ontario and 2 locations within the Hamilton region (919 Upper Paradise Road) (267 Upper Centennial Parkway). City of Hamilton is exploring the implementation of a municipal vaping products tax. I am writing to express my strong opposition to this initiative.

As a responsible retailer operating within a highly regulated industry, I can say with confidence that this proposal is misguided, harmful to public health goals, and economically damaging to compliant local businesses.

The vape industry is currently overtaxed, and the addition of any new tax regimes would only exacerbate the potential growth of the black market within the City of Hamilton and outlying regions. The increase in black market products will only add to the direct access of youth to vape products.

Vaping products carry a higher total excise tax burden than cigarettes. Vaping is taxed at 182% while cigarettes are taxed at 168% in Ontario. This is even though vaping is widely recognized as a harm reduction tool for adult smokers. Adding a municipal tax will punish adults who are trying to quit smoking and will treat vaping more harshly than the product it is meant to replace (combustible tobacco).

The statistics mentioned in the General Issues Committee discussion are not current. New data from Statistics Canada, the <https://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&SDDS=5233> published on March 7, 2025 shows that youth vaping has dropped by more than 40% over the past five years for youth ages 12 - 17 years of age. Major decisions that could ruin small businesses should be based on accurate and up-to-date information.

I urge the City Council to reconsider the decision regarding a municipal vape tax and focus instead on education and enforcement.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,  
Paul Counsell  
Select Vapes